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PROUD MAISIE.

CHAPTER I. ON THE TILES.

I was the daughter of a clergyman 'vicar for ten years of Mudford-in-the-Marshes on 200*l*. a year. He died, leaving a widow and seven children totally unprovided for.'

I was ten years old at the time, and the above urgent appeal nearly secured my election to a clergy orphan asylum. Very nearly; not quite. Appeals more urgent still, more clamorous at least, carried the day, and I was left to education, or rather spontaneous evolution, at home, a misfortune which I could never be induced to look back upon with sufficient concern.

The seven unprovided-for children went their seven ways. A fairy godmother, in the unromantic form of a moneyed maiden aunt, came to the rescue, helped to start the two eldest boys in the colonies and the two eldest girls in society, where they drifted swiftly and smoothly into matrimony, the haven where they would be.

Four from seven and three remain—Maisie and the twins Ethel and Claude.

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The twins were fine forward children of the period, to whose education and general spoliation the whole of my mother's and a good deal of my own time was devoted. They were pre-Raphaelite in appearance, wearing strange coloured picturesque dresses, and their fair hair clipped short on their foreheads, but in every other respect even ahead of the age.

Maisie was the imp of the family. Ours perhaps really required such an item, by way of contrast or relief, to enliven the picture when it became too conventional, an exception to prove or set off the rule. She might have been a changeling, so hopelessly did she put family likeness, mental and physical, to defiance; a small, agile, gipsy-like thing, dark, with large brown eyes like a Spaniard, and a disposition of which the good and the evil seemed equally to run in the grain.

Maisie, I should add, before going farther, was myself.

When I was about seventeen my aunt died, leaving all her property to us, her poor relations; an important change for the clergyman's widow, for the herit-

age included—not to dwell upon a most valuable pug-dog, one parrot, two Persian cats, and a tortoise—what to our economical souls appeared a comfortable income, and a lease of an old house in a part of London once quiet and obscure, but now rapidly becoming fashionable.

Thither we removed, and there for four years we had been leading a perfectly unexceptionable sort of life, but dull even as female lives go. A little study, a little gaiety, a little art, a little religion, a little society, a little charity—so ran the burden of time from day to day. It was a liliputian existence altogether.

I found it not unpleasant, though now and then a trifle unsatisfactory. But I knew no other, nor was likely to know. Was it not the life led by girls of my class in general? And those who are launched without oars, or rudder, or sail, or spy-glass, or compass, must drift on in the regular old channels, though ready enough to drift out of them, should new currents and new winds arise; as they will do suddenly, imperceptibly, without warning, driving the pretty cockle-shell of a boat out to sea, on the rocks, into port, or swamping it, as the chance may be.

One April afternoon I had just come in from a walk, and was sauntering up-stairs, talking aloud to my goldfinch, whose cage hung on the landing. Having no companions of my own age I frequently fell back on the dumb creation, and have occasionally held forth at some length to a tree, a China rose, or to Jock my bird, of whom it must be said that his answers, whether given in silence or in song, always seemed to me twice as satisfactory as those of my mother or the twins.

'Jocky mine, you little bird butterfly,' I chattered, 'I wonder how you contrive to keep your gold feathers so bright in this kingdom of fog? Flowers, colours, complexions, everything spoils but you. How do you manage it, Jock? Ah, you hold your tongue. I don't believe you're a bird at all. There's the lost and wandering soul of Narcissus, Adonis, or some other lovely stupid boy lurking somewhere under that plumage you're so proud of. I always thought so, Jock, from the first day when I picked you up, runaway and thief, pecking at the cherries in a fruiterer's shop, until—'

I stopped short as I reached the cage. The door stood open; the window also, alas!

'He has eloped, ah, the little scamp!' with a sudden drop from fondness to disgust. 'I do believe he is amusing himself on the roofs over there, flirting with his neighbours' canaries' wives.'

I scrambled out on the sill to reconnoitre, thence on the tiles.

What an odd vista of slate roofs, leaden pipes, and gurgoyles, shapeless windows, bristling chimney-stacks, and telegraph-wires, a mass of architectural lumber all huddled together, and lit up by the lurid saffron glow of a London afternoon sun! The fronts of these same houses were mathematically symmetrical and straight, but here behind the scenes, where successive landlords had built on as seemed right in their own eyes, there was no attempt at keeping up appearances.

Not a sign of the truant. But those tiles were irresistible. Already I had started on an aerial voyage of discovery, not unattended with danger, over those tempting forked roofs, prompted less, I fear, by zeal for Jock's salvation than by the charm of the scramble. Never before had I

known what an extensive promenade it was possible to take over our neighbours' heads.

'Ah,' I mused, pausing in mid air, 'the Jews and Arabs were right, wise men always did come from the East; they made their gardens on the housetops. Delicious! But shall I find the return journey equally easy, I wonder? It strikes me the chances are that I meet the fate of Claude Frolo. Our street is not quite so high as Notre Dame, certainly, but "twill serve." Why, O why, am I so fond of scrambling? There must have been a squirrel among my immediate ancestors.'

And I came sliding down a slate gable, but paused there. Some one else, it appeared, had come out to meditate upon the tiles.

Before me, about a house and a half off, stood a girl dressed in a loose, white, black-bordered serge *peignoir*, which hung in thick folds round her tall slim figure. Her face had a peculiar fascination which made itself instantly felt; not the attraction of beauty. Yet it seemed beautiful to me, cast in a sweet yet noble mould, the features rather large, but delicately shaped, the twists of ahy fair hair braided back with classical simplicity. The colouring was clear and faint, the eyes large and blue, and full of feminine softness of expression.

Two white doves were perched, one on her wrist, one on her shoulder, as she stood there holding a tapering jar in her hand, out of which she had been watering pots of hyacinths and tulips. She might have been the tinted statue of a Sibyl, or a Grecian priestess of some mysterious deity, a heroine of thoughts and looks as calm as a sheltered lake or the placid evening sky.

As we confronted each other,

and I remained still puzzling for her prototype, she smiled to me and spoke:

'You have lost your bird. He has flown over here. Do you see?'

Jock, whom, as I suddenly became aware, I had entirely forgotten in the excitement of the adventure, was there indeed, quite at home in the doves' empty cage beside the window, pecking busily away at their meal.

'He has led me a fine steeple-chase,' said I ruefully; 'indeed I've lost my way now. If I go any farther do you not think I shall be taken up for trespassing?'

'Had you not better follow me through the window into my room? Then I can let you out again through the house into the street.'

'Many thanks,' said I, relieved at the prospect of so safe and satisfactory a termination to my escapade. I was becoming an adept at scrambling, and in another minute had cleared the distance between us, and stood on the window-sill beside my friend in need, who sprang in accordingly and I after her.

I alighted in a small oblong room, whose fanciful arrangement charmed me not a little; a room without paper or carpet or curtains or table or chairs, furniture proper being everywhere conspicuous by its absence. There was plenty to look at, however: pictures on the darkly tinted walls, a Chinese bird and flower screen, several old-fashioned jars, a piano, an easel, and painting materials in profusion. Clustered round the window, which was large, taking up nearly the whole of one side of the room, hung a number of cages, containing doves, canaries, bullfinches, goldfinches—I noticed also two small owls, and a robin so tame that, though

uncaged, he showed no inclination to make use of his liberty. It was a perfect aviary, set in a frame of spring flowers, hanging baskets planted with cyclamens and ferns, hyacinths and narcissus, filling the room with colour and fragrance.

Assuredly, if men and women can be known and classified by their habitations, my new acquaintance was an original.

'Where am I?' ejaculated I, the intruder, involuntarily.

'You are in my workroom,' said the other.

'Ah, then, you are an artist,' I rejoined quickly, 'or—a naturalist?' I added, with a glance towards the window.

'A little of both, I hope. But I only paint birds and flowers, as you see; so my art sphere is very small, very narrow.'

'Narrow!' I exclaimed, in surprise—I, to whose fertile imagination the novel life suggested by the scene upon which I had stumbled seemed the most delightful into which I had ever had a glimpse—'I should have thought it wide enough for any life, any ambition of reasonable dimensions. But then I adore birds myself; they are like flowers with intelligence.'

She laughed. 'Are you an artist too?'

'O, no; I am—' Never was prisoner at the bar more at a loss how to give a satisfactory account of himself than was I at that moment. 'I am the eldest unmarried daughter of my mother, who is a widow.'

'O?'

A pause followed. I fancied she looked disappointed. How I wished I could have put it in a more interesting form!

'And I have no profession, no vocation, unless it be to read the papers, play on the piano, sing,

and make myself generally ornamental,' I continued, as sarcastically as I could. 'Sometimes I feel as if I really might attempt a little more, but—' and I thought despairingly of the schoolroom at home well occupied by the twins and their lesson-books in the morning, and the twins and their toys in the afternoon. Like Archimedes, if we are to shake the world, we must first of all have a place to stand upon; and I gazed wistfully at the paradise of solitude before me. 'Is this your home, may I ask?'

'O, no! I live with my uncle at Westburn, quite in the suburbs.'

'And this is your studio, I see.'

'It will not be mine for much longer now,' she replied.

'Will you tell me why?' I asked, struck by the sadness of her tone.

The bird-painter hesitated. 'I am not rich,' she said presently, with an effort, and colouring painfully; 'and the landlord here has lately thought fit nearly to double the rent of this attic. So in a few weeks I suppose I must make up my mind to leave. But I shall never like another studio so well. I have worked here for years; grown accustomed to the place, and foolishly fond of it.'

'No wonder,' I returned; 'I have only been here a quarter of an hour, and I feel that I love it already.' I checked myself on perceiving that the tears had come into the artist's eyes at the thought of having to remove.

A hundred wild ideas and philanthropic projects began to start up in my mind. I was not rich, either. Fifty pounds a year represented my private fortune, inherited from my fairy godmother. I longed now to play the good fairy myself. But how?

I could not go away, but lingered an hour or more, making friends with the birds and chatting with the artist, who, for her part, seemed to desire nothing better than to detain me. Already I felt more at home in that garret than in my mother's drawing-room. To depart before I had invented a pretext for returning the very next day would have been imperfectly intolerable; and I was beginning to have fears of becoming a troublesome fixture, when the bird-painter herself settled the difficulty by asking,

'Will you allow me to detain Master Jock here for a day or two? I am longing to paint his picture; I never saw such a fine specimen of his tribe.'

'Don't say that'—I laughed—'or you'll make him vainer than he is already. Yes, keep him by all means. But may I come to look on at his first sitting?'

'Of course. To-morrow morning, then, I shall expect you.'

And as we shook hands our eyes seemed to come to a vague mutual understanding. I felt as glad as an astronomer who, in sweeping the sky, has unexpectedly discovered a new and guiding star.

She accompanied me downstairs to the door. I was just starting off when I bethought me of turning back to observe,

'It's very well to say "What's in a name—or address?" but still it may be worth while to mention that I am called Maisie Noel, and that I live at Number One, round the corner.'

'And here is my card,' said the bird-painter, smiling.

I took it, and read—

'Eva Severn.'

CHAPTER II.

I TAKE A HOLIDAY.

'FRIENDSHIPS have been praised and glorified all the world over, in chronicles and pictures and songs and rhymes, wherever there were authors and artists to immortalise them. Modern history and fiction are full of Davids and Jonathans. But how few and feeble do the "celebrated female friendships" look beside them! Are they really such poor stuff, or is it only that we want a few more female geniuses to commemorate them? Look at Eva and myself. I feel that here's an alliance that will deserve to be famous at least. Our spirits must have met and fraternised in some mysterious manner long before we saw each other in the flesh. For this friendship of ours sprang up full-grown and ready for wear the first time we spoke, two months ago. It had no beginning here, nor will it have an end.'

My reverie was rudely broken by the entrance of the picturesque twina, who in their fantastic walking-apparel burst noisily into the room.

'Well, Maisie'—in chorus—'we've been for a turn in the Park.'

'Just to show ourselves,' said Ethel, throwing herself on the sofa and fanning herself with her hat; 'but guess whom we met.'

'O, some of the junior branches of the Royal Family,' said I carelessly, knowing of old what to expect.

'Royal Family!' repeated Claude, with disdain; 'why, they're all at Osborne, as you ought to know.'

'Excuse me, Claude; you've forgotten to read me the *Court Circular* for two or three days.'

'So there was rather a mouldy lot of people out this afternoon,' he pursued—'dowagers with all

the windows up, and that sort of thing. But we met, O, we met—'

'Speak out, Claude, do, or I shall think it must have been an angel at the very least.'

'Well, your friend Hilda Jarvis, riding in the Row. Such a mount, Maisie! Ah, don't you wish you had your thoroughbred, and rode in the Row, the admired of all beholders?'

'No, my dear boy. I have often and often broken the tenth commandment, and shall break it again, no doubt, but never for Hilda's mare.'

'Why?'

'Because I've no nerve on horse-back. All my spirit seems to me then to go into the horse. Quiet as a lamb before, he suddenly discovers his mettle, and I, that I'm a coward.'

'O, it's all practice; habit's everything,' said Claude. 'I felt the same myself, the first time I went to the riding-school, but I soon got used to it.'

'Hilda says she's coming to see you one of these days,' put in Ethel.

'That's only the third time she's said so,' I remarked reflectively, 'these three months.'

'O, but, Maisie, you forget it's the season now, and she has always so many engagements!'

'So she has, to be sure,' said I, suddenly starting up, 'whilst I've only one; and I'm forgetting that. Hilda, I forgive you. Ethel, you remember that Eva Severn has invited me to go home with her this afternoon; and I am to spend Sunday at her uncle's, at Westburn. You will see me back again on Monday, I suppose.'

'How fond you are of that Eva!' observed Ethel.

'Now look here, Ethel; not a word against Eva, if you please. She's my friend.'

'Maisie's bosom friend,' mocked

Claude, 'whom she never set eyes upon till two months ago!'

'Then can't you understand that we wish to do our best to make up for lost time?'

'O, I'm sure I don't want to run her down,' said Ethel considerably; 'mamma says she's really quite a ladylike person.'

'Ladylike!—come, I like that!' sneered Claude. 'Why, I saw her go by to-day; she had no gloves on.'

'Claude, you talk as if you kept a haberdasher's shop, and sold best kids at two-and-six,' I retorted. 'Now there's enough of dawdling. Go to lessons, you and Ethel.'

'So we shall,' said he; 'but I can tell you who's been dawdling away the whole afternoon, ever since—'

'Claude,' said I, catching him up, 'did you never hear what Shakespeare says?

"Idleness sometimes

Is best activity,"'

I declaimed solemnly; under cover of which grave rebuke I managed to escape with dignity from my young brother and sister, against whose precocious temperaments it was as much as I could do to hold my own.

Still laughing to myself at the recollection of Claude's mystified face, I made my way over to Eva's; not this time, however, as the crow flies, but on foot, up one street and down another, till I reached the house where I knew I should find the bird-painter at work in our attic.

Ours now, hers and mine. It was nearly two months ago that I had astonished her by offering to share the rent on condition that I should be allowed also to share the room. This had, therefore, become our joint studio, and I spent great part of my time there. My mother laughed at

the plan, but did not seriously object, and could not laugh me out of it. At that time I had a *grande passion* for reading and generally improving my mind. There, and there alone, could I get out of reach of Ethel's scales, Claude's gymnastics, and my mother's morning callers. The piano, kept by Eva chiefly for her friends, as she was no performer, was always at my disposal also. In short that room was a city of refuge, to which I could at any time flee from whatever might be uncongenial or repressive or exasperating in our domestic atmosphere.

So I ran in, like a rocket glad to be let off, and singing aloud,

'In summer time I saw a face
Trop belle pour moi, hélas, hélas !
Trop belle pour moi, voilà mon trépas.'

And here I came to a full stop.

'Proceed,' said Eva gravely.

'I cannot. It's a snatch of an old song, a tune I've had on the brain for several days.'

And I settled down on the floor, under the flowers by the window, where rose and geranium had succeeded to daffodil and hyacinth, and the tame canaries flitted about coolly over my head.

Since the day that I had cast in part and lot with Eva Severn that room had undergone many changes. Both of us worshipped *bric-à-brac* of course, and scarcely a day passed without bringing fresh 'latest additions' to our store, treasures we had picked up 'for next to nothing' at an obscure dealer's. To us there was a delightful odour of sanctity about these relics—relics often, I have since feared, no more genuine than the saintly bones at a martyr's shrine, but, like these, defying detection, and full of virtue for the faithful.

'How are you, Eva? What

have you been thinking of all day? How much nearer fame do you find yourself than yesterday? What new idea have you got to put forward?'

'That I ought to be the editor of *Notes and Queries*, to answer your questions in a column.'

'Never mind the answers. I only wanted to get rid of the questions. But down with that brush and palette, dear. It is five o'clock, the hour for tea and idleness.'

Obedient to orders Eva left her work and brought out our second-best teapot. It was real Japanese, but had no spout. We sat contentedly on the floor, sipping tea out of little Indian cups without handles.

My eyes rested critically on Eva's picture, her last creation, upon which we both built great expectations. It had been suggested by a scene she had once witnessed at a fair near Westburn—a gipsy who travelled about with a number of birds, which she had trained to perch on her head, answer her call, and do generally as they were told.

'What do you think of it?' asked Eva anxiously.

'The birds are admirable. If there was a cat in the room it would fly at them, and prove it. But the gipsy is bad—O, very bad indeed, Eva.'

'I know,' said the artist mournfully; 'but I have not been able to get a tolerable model for her.'

'Take me,' said I suddenly, laughing and starting up.

Pouncing upon a little heap of costume drapery that Eva kept by her, I ensconced myself behind the screen, and presently emerged in a short particoloured skirt, black bodice, scarf, and spangled cap.

'How's that?'

'Perfect. Why did it never occur to you before? Stand still, Maisie, if you love me, and let me sketch you so, exactly.'

'It's remarkably becoming,' she resumed, after a few minutes. 'You ought to go, just as you are, to the fancy ball at Westburn.'

'What, are you going to give a fancy ball?' I exclaimed, in dismay.

Eva laughed aloud.

'We? Why, our house is a mere nutshell, as I've often told you. But our neighbours at the Priory—such a pretty place, Maisie—have a grand *bal costumé* on Monday. I wish we were going.'

'So do I. I love a disguise. It puts people off their guard, and gives one a chance of getting at the truth about their characters. I often think that a woman is shown the world as we are shown the moon. She sees it in several phases, but half of it at least is always scrupulously kept turned away and out of sight.'

'Perhaps it is best for us.'

'So the cook said to the lobster, who expostulated at being boiled alive. I have my doubts as to the blessings of ignorance in the struggle for existence as it goes on in the present time. After all, why *should* a life of freedom and experience and adventure be considered more dangerous for the morals of young women than of young men?'

'O, because it opens the way to all sorts of delinquencies and imprudences, which are considered to do more harm both to the name and the nature of girls than of men.'

'Bah!' said I sceptically. 'Some people are born respectable, some achieve respectability, and some have it thrust upon them, Eva dear. As for the rest, there is a natural love of liberty and change

which ought to find a natural lawful outlet in ordinary life, and which, if this were provided, would not as now be dangerous. The reaction from over-repression is at least as much to be dreaded as the license of over-freedom. Only let girls be independent and self-responsible, and I will go so far as to say—'

'For pity's sake don't, Maisie. I think you've drifted off into some old speech made at a woman's rights meeting.'

I burst out laughing.

'Yes, sometimes I do feel, like Don Quixote, moved to become the champion of damsels in distress.'

'If either sex is in want of a champion now it is the other.'

'You must fight their battles, dear. Man delights me not, as you know; nor I man, I suspect. Eva, were you ever in love?'

'Once upon a time.'

'What was it like?' I asked prosaically.

'That's what I cannot tell you; but I suppose you will live and learn.'

Eva, though more youthful looking than many a girl in her first season, was six or eight years my senior in age and consequent experience.

'And how, may I ask, did you ever get out?'

'O, it takes two to make a love affair.'

'Or a quarrel. Did he marry then, or—'

'Die? Neither. But enough at a time, Maisie. My sketch must stand too, for we ought to be starting now. My uncle doesn't like to be kept waiting for dinner.'

Whose uncle ever did?

A quarter of an hour by train brought us to the suburban station of Westburn.

'We don't live within two

minutes' walk of the railway,' said Eva, 'but we may as well go from here on foot. The way through the fields is pleasant.'

Everybody knows the peculiar charm of the country on the borders of London—there where the distant clamour of the whirlpool strangely enhances the intense repose of wood and meadow. Westburn is so lovely that hitherto even Cockneys have failed to disfigure it; lovely in spring, a mass of almond- and apple-blossoms, of lilacs and hawthorn, but loveliest, perhaps, as I saw it then, in the 'leafy month of June.'

The lilacs had fallen, but the acacias were in full flower, and their perfume, mingled with the scent of wild orange-blossoms from a neighbouring garden, pervaded the whole air around.

We sauntered along across three waving hay-fields, mounted a hill, and reached a double row of red-brick houses enclosed by trees. At one end of the street stood a church, not picturesque but for old fashion and ivy, and surrounded by a pretty green churchyard.

We wandered in to inspect a strange and gnarled old yew, respecting whose age fabulous tales were told.

'Our windows overlook the cemetery,' observed Eva. 'Do you mind? Some people do.'

'No,' said I musingly. 'I dare say if one were to sit here long enough one might write an elegy to make a change from Gray's and throw it into the shade. What a large oppressive-looking tomb! "Sacred to the memory of"—"I wonder how often their "memory" is the first and only sanctified point about men and women—to the memory of Jasper Gerard." What Gerards are those?'

'O, of the Priory yonder. It

is Mr. Jasper Gerard who gives the fancy ball I told you about.'

'He! Eva, what a ghastly idea!'

'No, no,' she laughed; 'it is his great-grandson. The Priory is an old family place of theirs, but has been let for several years. Mr. Gerard has just returned from abroad, and is going to live here with his mother.'

'Do you know them?'

'Yes, a little; and it is rather strange that we have not been asked to their house-warming.'

A few steps brought us from the churchyard to Eva's tiny adjoining home. The single notable point about Mr. Severn's residence was its precious scrap of a garden at the back. Wonders indeed do the good people of Westburn achieve with their gardens, but few were so indefatigable and so successful as Eva's uncle. He was devoted to horticulture, the sole purely ornamental art of native English growth, and gave the whole of his spare time to the pursuit.

There in his allotment we found him hard at work, with a spade and a wheelbarrow, and as happy and proud as an artist in his studio.

Mr. Severn was one of those fortunate natures, a sprinkling of which seems absolutely necessary to the very existence of society. He was large, energetic, good-hearted, but phlegmatic; a kind of buffer for the over-sensitive to vent their nervous ebullitions upon; perfectly happy in the possession of an excellent digestion, epicurean temperament, and unshaken prejudices. He was an architect by profession, and had come to London at sixteen with half-a-crown in his pocket. By sixty he had made good his fortune and position, as men who come to London with half-a-

crown in their pocket are so apt to do. Shrewd, sanguine, benevolent, he was of a crying optimism that was sometimes depressing. In two minutes he and I were friends. It was impossible to be anything else with Mr. Severn.

'News for you, Eva,' he began to his niece. 'Coming from the station to-day whom should I meet but young Gerard. We walked up together. He seemed quite horrified to find out that we had never received an invitation to the ball on Monday. Says it must have been an oversight on his mother's part, for that our name was on his list—stood at the head of it, I think; I'm not sure. At any rate I couldn't get rid of him until I had promised to bring you.'

'Impossible. I have no dress.'

'O, nonsense! I thought ladies could always manage. Cut up the chintz window-curtain and go as your grandmother. Or, if the worst comes to the worst, put on your own dress inside out. Anything to give it a fancy look. But I knew you had one. There was that Greek gown you wore at those *tableaux vivants* last Christmas.'

'Ah, yes. But you, uncle?'

'O, mine settles itself. I was once an officer in the Westburn militia. Uniforms are against the rules at this particular ball; but Gerard has agreed to smuggle in me and mine, as we had such short notice.'

'If only Maisie could go,' sighed Eva.

'Why not? why not? Gerard's all civility. Bless my soul, he'd be delighted. Now I have got to go over there this very night to see him on business. He thinks the staircase isn't safe—might come down at the ball—and wants my opinion. Shall I mention it?'

I expostulated, faintly it must be owned. But the old gentleman had made up his mind, and all other minds, present and absent with it, he seemed to think.

And towards ten o'clock that night, when he returned from his call at the Priory, he triumphantly presented to us an invitation card, with his name and his niece's and Miss Noel's duly inscribed thereon.

'I simply told Gerard,' said he, 'that we had a pretty girl staying with us. Might I bring her? "Bring half a dozen," he replied. "I give you *carte blanche*." And he gave me this. Old Mrs. Gerard says she will chaperon you herself. I should have thought I might have managed that, but she says no.'

We went up-stairs, nominally to bed, but really to sit at the large open window in my room overlooking the churchyard, whence we could see, across the fields attached to the Priory, the twinkling lights in the house.

'What am I to wear, Eva? I have three evening dresses, all told, at home, but there is not a touch of local colour about a single one,' said I dolefully.

'Pink and primroses might do for Spring,' she suggested, laughing, 'or plain white for Snow. Then add a bunch of water-lilies, and you become Undine.'

I shook my head.

'I'd rather go in a clean tablecloth as a ghost. Or—I have an old gymnasium dress that had something of a Moorish tone about it.'

'The gipsy!' exclaimed Eva suddenly. 'Maisie, let me manage it all for you. You must and shall go. Leave it to me.'

So I left it. Early on Monday Mr. Severn went up to town, taking with him two notes; one

from myself to my mother, the other Eva's secret.

He returned in the afternoon bearing two answers. The first contained Mrs. Noel's sanction to her daughter's remaining for the ball; a sanction which, by the way, her daughter in her letter had forgotten to ask. The other was a large parcel addressed to Eva, and together with it came a little note, as follows:

'Dear old Girl,—Glad to be able to accommodate you, of course. Our burlesque collapsed on the third night, so there's that lovely Esmeralda dress of mine wasting away in the cupboard. Take it and wear it; take care of it, though, and send it back to

'Yours through thick and thin,
'NELL CLAXTON.'

'She's a little actress I knew once,' Eva explained, laughing. 'She dresses beautifully, and has generally a lot of pretty things by her. She has often helped me with costumes for models. Now let us see what she has sent.'

CHAPTER III.

UN BALLO IN MASCHERA.

SLOWLY, reluctantly, the summer day departed. The moon had been out since sunset, and now ranged high in the liquid cloudless sky. A burlesque trio were starting for the Priory; one Greek priestess, one militia captain, and Esmeralda the gipsy—Eva, Mr. Severn, and I. Unhesitatingly we pronounced ourselves a decided success. Eva, beyond question, looked Iphigenia to the life, so well did the dress harmonise with the spirit of her face. For if the features were English, not Greek, in outline, the serene refined simplicity which was the

leading idea of her countenance was of that rare character we must still call classic.

Never did I laugh so much in five minutes as during that brief drive. My home people were too literal to indulge in much nonsense, but I often made up for that abroad. 'Captain' Severn stared at me in blank amazement. To a man of his even temperament a fit of mad mirth was as incomprehensible as an attack of the blues. And is there indeed in life a more wildly unaccountable phenomenon than the 'spirits' of some people? It is as if some trickey sprite, Puck or Oberon, had power to enter into us and divert himself by now intoxicating us with gaiety, now smothering us with gloom. I puzzled myself by my own high feather.

But once within the Priory walls the merry demon forsook me. Already a motley crowd were assembled. There was Falstaff with Haidée on his arm, Marie Antoinette busily flirting with the Heathen Chinee, and a little jockey escorting Madame de Pompadour.

At one of the doors of the ante-room into which we passed stood a correct and elaborate old Florentine court-dress with a lady in it, the hostess. Somewhat condescendingly she went through the usual form of words with us as we shook hands with her and her son, a tall Venetian noble in black, a costume that curiously threw out the colour of his eyes as blue as Eva's—eyes that certainly never stood in a Venetian head. In all other respects he might very well have been the Giorgione he personated.

We moved on, to make way for the stream of travestied faces and figures now pouring in. Eva and her uncle had found some friends. I, who knew nobody, was watching that Florentine duchess.

Another lady, tall, young, beautiful exceedingly, and in a superb Eastern costume, was standing by, and I overheard her ask the hostess a careless question about Mr. Severn's party—Who might we be? I also caught the reply, given low and aside, but in a perfectly clear and audible tone:

'My dear Lady Meredith, you ask too much. Half the people here to-night are absolute strangers to me. A perfect mob, I assure you. I am literally afraid to look round, lest I should see the butcher and baker with their wives and families among the rabble. It's all my son's fault. He insisted on asking everybody.'

Not knowing whether to laugh or be indignant, I turned away. Eva had gone off with a partner. Mr. Severn introduced me to a Knight Templar, and the revels began in earnest.

In terrible earnest too, thought I presently. For it seemed to me like a solemn burlesque or a masquerade. Few of the ladies and none of the men seemed to take kindly to their disguise. I saw gallant Bayards and Sidneys, *sans reproche*, no doubt; but so far from being *sans peur* as to show themselves unable to cross the room without some fear and trembling, and the haunting misgiving 'What a guy I look!' all too plainly written on their countenances. I saw queens and princesses evidently loth to dance from motives of economy, dreading to spoil dresses worth ten pounds a yard; and sadly I admitted that we were only a flock of jackdaws after all, despite our peacocks' feathers. *Cœur de Lion* was quite at a loss what to do with his sword, and my Knight Templar's chain armour gave him a world of trouble. The reigning expression of countenance partook of a solemnity ludicrously unsuit-

ed to the occasion. Very slowly, as the evening wore on, our spirits rose, and we began to look a little less like a parcel of Quakers in disguise. I had been waltzing in turn with an Egyptian priest, an Albanian, and Chilpéric, looking myself doubtless as grave as a judge, and finding it all, indeed, but dreary fun. For my heroes felt that all their wits were required for the graceful management of garments designed before waltzing was invented, and thus had none left to spare for conversation. Suddenly Eva came up and introduced me to her partner, a remarkably handsome, brown-haired, brown-eyed young fellow, frankly and delightfully conscious of his irresistible appearance in his Neapolitan fisherman's dress. Theodore Marston was the name I caught, but his face had something unmistakably southern in its type, and I found it easiest to think of him 'in character' as Masaniello. He led me off to dance. Here was a change, and a blessed one—a masquerader not ashamed of his borrowed plumes. We talked without stopping. It was all the merest nonsense; light, frothy, sparkling, and pleasant, like the claret-cup and the crackers, but just as little worth dwelling upon. My cavalier all the while, as I was somehow aware, paid but the minimum amount of attention to me, his partner. That animation was simply the overflow of animal spirits, like the gambolling of a spaniel that sees its master putting on his hat, or, to be more poetical, like the chirruping of a skylark. To him I was just a girl—a nice girl, perhaps—but he was at an age when all girls look nice. His heart, besides, was already gone for the evening to Lady Meredith. He raved about her beauty to me. I responded, which seemed both highly to sur-

prise and to delight him; and he confided to me that the object of his admiration had graciously promised him a waltz in the course of the evening.

That was the first dance I had really enjoyed. I was sorry when it came to an end and my lively exhilarating partner left me, having first shown me, with boyish glee, his card crammed with engagements.

I sat there by Mr. Severn, a little figure in variegated skirts overspread by a tunic of gold chains with sequins hanging everywhere, a blue starry scarf round my waist, bodice and head-dress of gold, and tambourine by my side. I became critical, as non-dancers do. Presently I found myself—not for the first time that evening—unconsciously watching Mr. Gerard. Why was he so conspicuous? There were taller men in the room; there were many handsomer; his costume was the very reverse of showy.

What was it in him that, so to speak, appropriated attention? In that whirling maze of brilliant figures his was always visible, seeming moreover, wherever it passed, to extinguish and dwarf the others by a certain stamp of uncommon power, refinement, and repose—a combination not often seen, and beside which other types fall into insignificance.

He looked frankly bored, which was excusable. Ladies were in the majority, and as host he was in duty bound to provide for the wallflowers. 'Even to the awful point of dancing with them himself,' thought I, amused.

At that moment he caught my eyes fixed upon him with a little look of curiosity. I happened to lie in his way, a wallflower too. He glanced around him in dismay—already the last man had been pressed into the service—then

came to a standstill before me, striving to recollect my name.

That was out of the question. Fortunately the dress spoke for itself.

'Mademoiselle Esmeralda,' he said, with as much politeness as a bow and ceremonious tone can carry, 'may I have the pleasure of dancing with you?'

'O, no, *eccellenza*,' I replied quickly, echoing his tone of mock respect; 'too much honour by far for a gipsy.'

'O, nonsense!' he said, laughing; and swept me off unresistingly to the dance.

Only twice round the room; then he stopped and led me into the hall, saying,

'You are tired; so am I. Let us rest a little.'

I was not tired, though breathless, after that brief wild waltz. But I fancied he was accustomed to find young ladies thinking that he knew best, and acquiesced in whatever he proposed. 'Should we go in to supper?' said he. By all means. But the table was crowded. Into the conservatory, then? Certainly. But there, again, we found all the seats occupied by picturesque-looking couples. 'We won't disturb them,' said Mr. Gerard discreetly; and I wondered why it is that we can never see a lady and gentleman in a greenhouse together without an impression that the latter must be proposing at the very least.

As we wandered down the passages I so far overcame my awe of my partner as to hazard an admiring remark on the Priory—a most sympathetic house to erratic minds.

'Yes; it's a quaint old rambling pile of a place, is it not?' he responded carelessly.

'Such as one might look for in the precincts of a cathedral, or the wilds of Devonshire.'

'Exactly; I know what you mean. Well but inconveniently built, with damp picturesque panelled rooms, stray steps to trip you up, large chimneys to smoke, shaky spiral staircases, oak floors for spraining ankles, and oriel windows that will neither open nor shut.'

'And all within sound of Bow Bells and sight of the Clock Tower. O, what a charming room that is!' I exclaimed involuntarily, as we passed a doorway.

'That's my study,' said he, pleased. 'Do you like it? Then let us go in.'

The door stood wide open, as also the tall narrow windows. They were level with the ground, and overlooked a lawn dimly lit up by Chinese lanterns, and dotted with trees, tents, and happy pairs.

The study was empty. We seated ourselves on the divan, where we could still hear the wavy waltzes in the ballroom, and watch the masqueraders sauntering up and down the passage and over the grass in the garden.

Mr. Gerard's library was not large; but, books apart, the fine tapestry on the walls, carved-oak furniture, rare and delicate blue tiles on the hearth, quaint coloured glass in the windows, and several choice gems of art, made of it a little picture that engraved itself in my memory as a thing I could never forget afterwards, even though I would.

'Rather too like an International Exhibition, isn't it?' he said uncomfortably. 'It is scarcely in order yet—rugs from Persia, tea-trays from Japan, slippers from Turkey, and so on.'

'O, don't say that,' I returned, with a sigh of envy; 'our poor little attic will look poorer than ever after this.'

'Attic?' he repeated, laughing.

'May I ask, do you inhabit an attic?'

'Did you expect La Esmeralda to inhabit a Venetian palazzo? Let me tell you Miss Severn and I share a garret on the third floor, which we are trying as fast as possible to transform into an old curiosity shop. Nothing under a hundred years of age is admitted.'

'Then you must first exclude yourselves.'

'Furniture, furniture—don't you understand?'

He seemed amused.

'So you have a study too. Pray what do you study there?'

'Miss Severn paints.'

'And you?'

'I!—O, gipsies are the idlest people, you know. What should they do? Dance or tell fortunes.'

'Then you can tell me mine, of course. Begin, please.'

His manner won me singularly; and manner speaks volumes. Superiority was there without self-assertion, politeness without affectation. If only I could have shaken off a stupid sensation of timidity, reminding me of my feelings when, as a child, I used to play with a huge Newfoundland dog! That was delightful too—a most fascinating game, but with dashes of terror between. Mr. Gerard was alarming, because it was written on the face of him that he would be critical and hard to please. 'But how can it possibly matter to me,' thought I, 'whether I please him or not? Unanswerable; only whilst dancing and chatting with my other partners it had never occurred to me to make such speculations at all.'

I shunned looking him full in the face; his placidity was disconcerting. I sat staring straight before me, staring at the reflection of our two heads in a Venetian mirror on the opposite wall. Es-

meralda, and—shall we say?—Ezzelin looking at her for a moment with a certain admiration, but which to me, from him, seemed worse than none.

'Well, and my fortune?' said he presently.

I turned round and faced him boldly. At that time I believed firmly in the equality of the sexes, and to be riveted and spellbound thus, even for a minute, by a miserable man was simply contemptible.

'Your fortune, Mr. Gerard? But you and I are strangers.'

'If that perplexes you, you are not the sorceress you profess to be.'

'Aren't you afraid lest the sorceress shouldn't prophesy good concerning you, but evil?'

'O, if you do that, I sha'n't believe you, that's all,' said he, laughing. 'After all, there are only two evils a man must dread, because he can't escape them. I don't need the voice of a prophetess to warn me of their approach; and fortunately the last puts an end to the first.'

'And which are these—the only two?'

'Old age and death. I warn you I have nothing else to fear.'

'Then you must surely be the prince at whose birth all the fairies presided.'

'Don't say that, for, if I recollect right, there always came some tiresome uninvited guest, who sent a curse that spoilt everything.'

'Fear her, then,' said I playfully.

'Not I; why, she can't avert gray hairs or the grave. As for the rest, good or evil, it rests with a man himself to choose or decline.'

'Then may you always know them apart!' said I at random.

'What?' he laughed; 'do you think I should make a mistake?'

'Why not? Fortune so often says, "Shut your eyes and open your mouth," and what we believed to be bread turns out a stone.'

'Most true. Now can Esméralda the wise tell her own fortune?'

'I don't see it written in my face or in my hand.'

'Perhaps in the stars, then. Suppose we go out, and cast your horoscope.'

We stepped into the garden, strolled away over the turf, in and out of the shrubberies, and up and down the chestnut avenue. The night was warm and still, not a breath stirred to carry away the scent of the flowers that made the air heavy with sweetness.

'What a sky!' said he suddenly; 'I have not seen so many stars out since I left Italy. One could almost fancy oneself back in Venice.'

'Venice?' I repeated, 'for the name to me had a charmed sound, like "paradise" or "fairyländ." Were you there lately?'

'O, about a month or two ago,' and he began talking of the lagunes, the gondolas, the palaces, sunsets on the Lido, and all the other famous fascinations of that city of wonders, without even pretending to be indifferent to them. I listened as a sparrow might to the travellers' tales of a lucky swallow.

And the English garden and the English assembly melted away, and, lo it was Carnival time, and a *bal masqué*. We were in St. Mark's Piazza, now watching the *festa*, now on a stone balcony listening to the sleepy ripple of oars and the songs of serenaders below.

Then we went on to Rome, and he took me—by moonlight, of course—over the ruins of the Forum, brought before me the

temples, churches, and priceless art monuments of two worlds that mark out that spot above all others, and ever must, through all changes to come.

Then somehow we got to Naples, spent some time among the frescoes of Pompeii, and wasted more under the orange-woods of Sorrento.

Tiring of this we flew off to Algiers, Tunis, Egypt—for Mr. Gerard had been an enterprising swallow—thence with one leap we crossed over to the rude forests of Norway, and, with all proper admiration for the north, true and tender as it may be, agreed just then to prefer the south.

Whilst taking these Ariel-like travels in all directions, we were sitting quietly in a kind of natural arbour of bushes overgrown by trailing roses, honeysuckles, and creepers. I might pine for Italy figuratively, but nevertheless, pining here, listening to the story of Mr. Gerard's graphic *impressions de voyage*, I was happy, exquisitely, irrationally happy, as I had never felt before.

A young man in red and yellow garments, with a fool's cap and bells on his head, came lounging by, looking about him. He glanced into the arbour and stopped.

'Ah, Gerard, sorry to interrupt, but Mrs. Gerard has been asking for you everywhere. She wants you particularly, I was told.'

'Does she indeed?' returned Mr. Gerard, with refreshing insolence. The intruder beat an affronted retreat, and I laughed.

'I think I must go and see what she wants, though,' said my companion, when the other was out of sight. 'I'll come back to you directly, if you'll wait here for me. That is, unless you are longing to return to the ball-room?'

I was not longing to return to the

ballroom, and said I would wait. He had not disappeared many minutes before I began to repent. He did not return directly, and here was I, a maiden all forlorn, in my bower. Couples would come wandering in, and wonder, as well they might, to find me there alone. Mr. Gerard might be unavoidably detained. Supposing he forgot me. Esmeralda no doubt was, by rights, a very independent young person. Still, this was my first appearance in that character, and I scarcely relished the idea of sallying forth, without even a goat to protect me, to seek my friends and my fortune in that crowd. I felt extremely irate with Mr. Gerard. Return at last he must, surely. Then he will apologise, and I shall stiffly request him to be so good as to conduct me back to the ball-room.

I waited and waited, and at last, in desperation, was on the point of emerging when I caught sight of the truant in the distance, coming up the winding walk.

Not alone. The lovely Lady Meredith was on his arm!

This was insult multiplying injury. Quick as thought I slipped out. The prospect of being found—of making a third with them in that odious bower—was not to be borne for a moment.

As they passed, seeing it empty, they sauntered in.

I stood outside, lingering dubiously under the chestnuts. I had certainly not improved my position by forsaking even the kindly shelter of the arbour. At this awkward moment I heard a foot-step approaching, and a voice humming an air from the *Elisir d'Amore*.

It was Masaniello, also by himself.

'Why, Miss Noel! and all alone! What does this mean?'

'It means that my partner was called away to speak to somebody,' said I vaguely, 'and we got separated.'

'And you are looking for him. Just my case. Won't you take my arm! and then we can look together.'

Gladly I accepted the timely escort.

'I wonder,' he resumed restlessly, 'if she means to cheat me out of the dance I've been looking forward to all the evening?'

'Depend upon it she is waiting just as impatiently, and wondering what has become of you. But who is to find anybody in this crowd?'

'Still I thought I must see her.'

'Why? Is she "more than common tall"?'

'She is more than common beautiful,' returned Masaniello enthusiastically.

'I won't ask her name. But her costume?'

'It is Greek, I suppose—Medora, Zoraide, Zuleika.'

'Zuleika!' I exclaimed suddenly. 'Ah, Lady Meredith, of course. I saw the gleam of her gold bracelets only two minutes ago. Where was it? O, I recollect; across the twigs of that arbour.'

'What? In there?' and he drew me off in the direction. 'Yes, that she is, and with Gerard too,' savagely.

'Better not disturb them,' I urged ironically; but he persisted. The fantastic scene, summernight, bright lights, music and dancing, perhaps also the champagne, had all helped to exhilarate him, and turned his head a little.

I remonstrated no further, and the next moment we stood looking in at them.

'Admirable!' muttered the jealous boy in my ear, darting angry

glances at the pair. 'They ought to be photographed so.'

I could have laughed aloud. I only saw one thing—that Mr. Gerard looked so bored, plainly, profoundly bored. Under that deceptive trellis of eglantine and clematis he sat with the patience of a Christian martyr or a well-bred Englishman, doing his duty, the civil, that is, to his lady-guest, who, as a peer's wife and a beauty and coquette in her own right, had reckoned, perhaps, on something more, and was piqued and disappointed by his very good manners.

My jealous pang was gone in an instant, but its coming should have startled me.

Masaniello and I did not look bored or *blasé*, but both effervescing with youth, animation, and wild spirits. I daresay we looked more than half in love with each other. Yet we were no such thing, and Masaniello had no eyes but for Zuleika, the indolent black-haired beauty leaning back against the trellis, regardless of her crushed satin and jewels.

We entered brusquely, and startled Mr. Gerard, who frowned. Not so the lady.

'O you volatile sailor-boy!' she said reproachfully. 'Here have I been dragging poor Mr. Gerard all over the grounds in search of you, rebel and renegade.'

'Yes, but the rebel who made himself king for a night and a day,' he retorted recklessly; 'my reign is not over yet.'

'Ah, and you think you may choose your slaves?'

'I don't want slaves,' said he audaciously, 'only a queen. Lady Meredith!—imploringly—'I think this is the last waltz.'

'And as you will not dance it with me—' she began archly.

'But I will, I will,' said he,

with a smile so bright and sudden that it was like sunshine breaking out over the sea; 'that is, if—'

'O, I resign you,' said I lightly, anticipating him; 'our agreement was only until you found your partner.'

Quickly he vanished with her, and I was left alone with Mr. Gerard, whose manner had changed back again, from fortitude to—well, to what was complacency by comparison.

'Shall we stay here,' said he, 'till the valse is over? I shall not dance any more myself.'

I acquiesced in silence.

'Lady Meredith got hold of me,' he added, suddenly seeming to recollect that he owed an apology; 'I had to take her in to supper, and could not get rid of her afterwards.'

'How profanely you talk!—"get rid" of the lovely Zuleika!'

'Ah, you admire Zuleika?'

'Of course. Do not you?'

'As I admire a beautiful sign-board.'

'A *what*?' said I, laughing gaily.

'No more, I assure you. She has beauty, I know—plenty. I've seen it by candlelight, daylight, twilight, limelight, gaslight, moonlight, and there's a sameness about it that is positively appalling at last, and only too faithful a picture of her conversation. Don't you know there was once an automaton that could talk when it was wound up?'

'If only Masaniello could hear you!'

'He has quite lost his heart to her, the foolish fellow.'

'Yes, but he is so very young,' I remarked considerably; and Mr. Gerard laughed.

'Older than you by some years, I fancy. Let me see, Theodore is five-and-twenty.'

'Is he a friend of yours?' I ventured.

'Yes; that is, I know him and his history—he has a history, as you've heard, I daresay.'

I shook my head, and Mr. Gerard explained:

'He began life with a good appointment in the Treasury and a magnificent tenor voice. His mother was an Italian, and very musical. He determined to follow his inclination and go on the operatic stage, and has lately returned from abroad, where he has been studying for a few years. Next week he is to make his *début* in London in the *Freischütz*. Why, you seem interested in him.'

'I—no; I never saw him before to-night.'

'Is that a reason?'

Involuntarily our eyes met. There was not the smallest excuse for blushing, but crimson I must grow and crimson I grew, though little had Masaniello to do with it.

'And I daresay,' I proceeded hastily, 'I should not break my heart if I never saw him again. But I shall like to hear him, if he is a good singer.'

'You are fond of music?'

'It was my first love.'

'My first and last,' said he.

Inwardly I wondered how many had intervened. At that moment I would have given anything to know.

'*On revient toujours à ses premiers amours*,' I said sententiously. 'What an awful amount of inconstancy the proverb takes for granted, though!'

'More than is fair, do you think?' he inquired, laughing.

'How can I tell? I am not old enough, I suppose, to have taken many sentimental journeys of discovery.'

'How many do you propose to take, may I ask?' was his next question.

'I don't know. I suppose it would depend upon the first.'

Somehow we were drifting fast into one of those duets, half banter, half earnest, where a very few words interchanged may lead to a most extensive intimacy of spirit where any sort of affinity exists. An instinct, as we hovered on the perilous regions of sentiment, drove me to cling more and more to the tone of levity as he became serious. If it was a flirtation he wished for, something held me back. Had he pleased me less I might have more easily responded, but there are feelings of one's own with the very shadows of which one is reluctant to trifle. They are edged tools, and one is a child at the mercy of the merciless weapon one pretends to wield.

When the last echoes of the last dance-music died away, he

and I were still under the trellis, talking and watching the falling stars.

'I suppose it is "God save the Queen" now, and *exceunt*,' said I, with a sigh. 'Mr. Severn and Eva will be looking for me.'

'And they will certainly never think of looking for you here,' said he. '*Allons*, let us see if we can find them.'

'Which of all the dances did you enjoy most?' said Eva, who had religiously waltzed all the programme through, as we drove off.

'O, the last, the last,' said I heedlessly.

'Why, who was your partner? Were you invisible? I never saw you in the ballroom.'

'No,' said I, shaking my head; 'we danced it outside, Mr. Gerard and I.'

(To be continued.)



WINTER RESORTS OF LONDON SOCIETY.

NICE.

NICE—Nizza—what memories, what associations cluster about the name! To many who take their pleasure on the Promenade des Anglais, or amuse themselves bric-à-brac hunting along the Quai de Masséna, the place suggests nothing more than is contained in the obvious fact that it is one of the gayest and most delightfully placed cities on the continent of Europe. Delightfully placed, that is, to the stout of frame, who do not mind the icy blasts which sweep down from the adjacent gullies of the Maritime Alps; and 'gayest,' that is, to the long of purse, who do not mind the long pull, the strong pull, and the pull all together which the Niçois—none better—know how to make upon them. To such folk Nice is incomparably pleasant. There are all the elements of enjoyment procurable by dollars, and there in the immediate surroundings are wonderful beauties of sea and landscape which, though they cannot be bought, may be enjoyed. To those who cannot amuse themselves as rich Americans and Russians do, and who yet are compelled to spend time at Nice from considerations of health or duty, the legends of the place will afford an ample source of interest. Every yard of the city has its history, every acre of the neighbourhood its tradition.

At Cimies, at the back of the town, where the Romans, with Roman wisdom, built their city on the hill instead of on the exposed plain, there are ruins

enough to enable the imagination to rebuild and to repeople ancient Nice. Does not the road from Nice to the mountains lie through the very amphitheatre in which Roman Emperors witnessed the arena sports, and in which gladiators looked nervously to the still extant stalls for the upturned or downcast thumb which was to determine their life or death? Are not the people on those heights, where villas nestle and group themselves, indebted to pre-Christian wells for the water they drink? Do not the Romans yet survive in the ruins of their city?

Upon these and other memories let that intelligent French officer of engineers be your guide, who, being quartered at Nice directly after the French occupation of the principality, set himself to find out all that was knowable about it. With him you shall stand on the very spot where the Moslem invaders were flung time after time from the walls they had scaled; where the brave Niçoise Segurana, when all seemed lost, restored spirit to the defenders and struck terror into the assailants by tearing down with her own hands the green flag of the Prophet; and where the Counts of Provence and the Dukes of Savoy fought times out of number for the ownership of the soil. In the magic mirror of the historical kaleidoscope you shall see Genoese fleets fighting the battle of Christian civilisation against the attacks of Islam in the waters of Villefranche, and the

defeated but unconquered Knights of Rhodes sallying forth from the port of Nice, to take vengeance on the infidel. You shall see the absorption of the Republic of Nice, after years of insecure greatness, in the duchy of Savoy; and you shall see in times far within living memory the removal of the French frontier-line from the Var to a limit which includes the birthplace of Garibaldi and the finest port of the whilom kingdom of Piedmont.

There is very much to see and to think about in this direction at Nice for those who care to see and think about such things at all. Of this number probably there will be few in that 3 P.M. train which leaves Nice daily for Monte Carlo, and quite as few in that large crowd which surges around the band places, and, judging from appearances, is wholly given up to affording milliners an opportunity for comparing notes upon living models.

Nice is certainly not a city of the dead; it is the resort of some of the most active living. Even those who to the corporal eye seem to be beyond mortal touch and speech are not really passed away—they are of the class who, being dead, yet speak; whilst those who congregate now in her streets are of a kind the fact of whose living leaves nothing to the imagination. East and West meet in the fulness of incongruity, the North adds its quota, and the picturesque South is not wanting in representatives. But it is the Westerns who are dominant. If Cannes be accounted the fee simple of the English, Nice is shared by the natives in coparcenary with the Americans. Recognisable American forms occupy the streets, to the complete satisfaction of the shopkeepers. The accents of the

American tongue are borne upon the air, and the arrangements of every hotel bear testimony to the Transatlantic *clientèle* out of whom proprietors hope to make money. Villefranche, the sheltered port of Nice, is in truth America's naval station in the Mediterranean. *Hic illius arma, hic currus fuit*, and it was not so long ago that negotiations were actively pressed forward for purchasing the right to that occupation which international courtesy allowed, and still allows. The stars and stripes are more familiar than the tricolor at mastheads of war-ships frequenting Nicene waters, and one sees the effect in the quietly masterful way in which the subjects—one should rather say the children—of the star-spangled banner pursue the even tenor of their way about the place. At the Cercle, at the opera, on the promenades—even on that designated 'des Anglais'—in the *salons*, everywhere; the American nation hath the preëminence. Were it not for the old-world look of older Nice, and for the unquestionably French appearance of the garrison, one might doubt he was in continental Europe, in the very midst of the traditions of a far backward stretching past. The voice that is heard is Jacob's voice, but the place and the surroundings belong to Esau.

Very Esaus indeed do the Nipois account their French masters. Ask that Franco-Italian-looking woman, who keeps the small bookshop in the old town, near the port, what she thinks of the new *régime*. Listen, and, if you can, understand the words she utters—volubly, gutturally, and with much eloquence, albeit of a provincial sort—against the insolence, as she calls it, of the new landlords; their assumption of superiority in the face of a na-

tion and of institutions which were famous when the forbears of the powers that be were the unkempt barbarian vassals of the imperial companions of the local ancestry.

To complete the picture, it would be as well to spend five minutes in the *salon* of the Parisian *modiste*, six doors off, who cannot, for the life of her, comprehend what makes these dull natives *si bête*. 'Would madame believe it, they can hardly be got to acknowledge a simple *bonjour*?' You meet them in a crowded reception—*on ne bouge pas*. At a *café* or concert they will not give place even to a lady.

This is all very terrible; and to people who complain of German conduct in Alsace and Lorraine, it is quite unintelligible. Yet so it is; and between the French and the aborigines in Nice there is a great gulf fixed. The one people may date, it is true, from a thousand years; but the other, as the Basque peasant said to the Montmorency, have left off dating. *Enfin, que voulez-vous?* What is to happen when two incompatible temperaments are linked in forced union? There is small chance at Nice, or anywhere else, under those circumstances, of any strong practical exposition of the duty towards one's neighbour.

It is a lovely place this Nice, with its face towards the sea, its back to the mountains, and its flanks covered by the long promontory of the Cap d'Antibes on the one side and the heights of Villefranche, crowned by the old citadel of Nice, on the other. The seashore plain on which it stands was built up centuries ago by the give-and-take process that goes on everlastingly where sea and mountain meet and dispute for the mastery. Between the two stands now the long stretch of shore that

reaches from Nice to Antibes, fifteen miles away; and upon it stands the city which long contended with Marseilles for the title of Queen of the Mediterranean.

Phœceans, Greeks, Romans, Moslems, and Christians of all kinds, have loved and dwelt in the place. Its marvellous beauty as well as its natural strength have made it an object of envy, and bitter have been the struggles for it. Nature too has had her methods of compensation for the adornments she has lent. Earthquake and pestilence have ravaged the district more than once; and the local chronology is framed on the plan of dating from some calamity or great event which has had a more abiding interest for the people than the ordinary standards.

The outcome of it all is nevertheless very pleasant to us of the nineteenth century; and he who, in quest of a winter resort, whether for health or pleasure, wishes for more of a town than Cannes and less of a sanatorium than Mentone cannot do better than settle at Nice. If shelter from sharp winds be his object, let him climb to Cimies, on the hill at the back. There he will find, in villas of all sorts and sizes, the warmest, cosiest, and for distant views the delightfullest, spot in the district. Cimies is to Nice what Canet will some day be to Cannes. Backed directly by the hills, which form the southern guard of the Maritime Alps, it is sheltered from the cold blasts which sweep down from the Alps themselves. The icy winds pass by it overhead; and the houses, clustered in safe nooks, turn their faces and windows to the south, and admit no air that is not warmed by the bright strong sun, to which English winters are strangers.

But those who elect for Cimies must depend upon themselves for amusement. At Cimies is no Cercle, no theatre, no concert, no band-playing, no promenade. Dwellers therein must be content literally to look down upon such things, and literally to be above them. At Nice such things abound, but the most amusing public institution in Cimies is a monastery.

Now the monastery, though not strictly amusing, unless to those English of whom Froissart asserts that they 'amuse themselves sadly,' is most strictly entertaining in the only direction of entertainment to which Cimies lends itself. Books it has in profusion; and it is a sign of the largeness of the monks' charity, and at the same time of their little contact with the world in general, that they are willing to lend their books—simple men!—hoping that people will return them. Foul befall the man who deceives these good monks, and makes them shut up their compassion and their library from the needy at Cimies!

The needy will then have to depend wholly upon their own resources. For reading books, enjoying the magnificent prospects afforded by the many points of view in the neighbourhood, trying to get better, and shaking hands with yourself that you are not as other Englishmen at home—freezing, shivering, unable to take exercise through fear of wicked winds,—these are about the daily stock-in-trade of people who set themselves down at Cimies. One hesitates to descend the steep eight-hundred-feet-high hill that leads to Nice, knowing that he will experience in returning the full force of Virgil's aphorism about the difference between the *descensus* and the *ascensus Averni*. Visits to Nice are events to be fully recorded in diaries with de-

tails of the way, of the things and people seen in the great city on the plain; perils not to be entered upon without much consideration, nor unattended by solemn rites at their inception and their ending. *Chefs* and such divinities, postmen and the like, go and come, fetch and carry. Is not Cimies fed from Nice? But the majority of the inhabitants remain upon their coign of vantage from day to day; and only visitors at Nice, and the curious among the Niçois, invade their retirement.

Yet what more delightful drive, except perhaps along the Corniche road, is there to be found on the Riviera than the drive from Nice down the Promenade des Anglais and through Carabacel to Cimies, and thence through the Roman amphitheatre down the northern road back to Nice? *Crede experto*; and if the result should not prove satisfactory, try the Corniche itself, starting from Mentone.

For the sound in health and purse Nice itself is the place. The Brighton *habitué* will find a parallel between his beloved 'Parade' and the far lovelier Promenade des Anglais, and he will affectionately compare the Brighton shops with those of the Quai de Masséna and the Quai du Midi. But there the parallel will end. There is perhaps something to remind one of London-by-the-Sea, especially in the article of shops and in the prices asked for the goods therein—though on the latter score it ought to be remembered to the advantage of Nice that it is less Barabbas-like than Cannes.

Hotel and pension open wide their doors and swallow up the traveller, and give him reason in due time to remember his sojourn among them. If charges are somewhat high, the accommodation is very good, and people—especially

heads of families—who growl at the ‘extras’ to the pension charge, at the fifty centimes for each cold tub and the seventy-five centimes for each candle, should not forget that Nice is habitable during half the year only; that rents are high, taxes very heavy, and that able *chefs* and quick-footed servants are not secured for nothing.

It is no part of the business of the writer of this paper to act as patron or as touter to the hotels. He will follow the example of the undergraduate, and decline, as that gentleman did, to draw invidious distinctions, when he was called on to enumerate the major and the minor prophets. There are many excellent hotels at Nice. Let the traveller choose for himself, and find out by experience whether the houses on the promenades or on the quais are the more frequented by mosquitoes. On arrival outside the station he will find drawn up, in serried lines, the omnibuses of the hotels, and the only friendly hint given to him here in connection with the subject of housing, is, that he should decide before arrival at what hotel he means to stop. With this foreknowledge he will find himself relieved of all luggage troubles by the uniformed attendants of the stage-carriage. Without it he may find his family partitioned off among the representatives of the Nice hotel proprietary, and his luggage the subject of much animated conversation in a language probably unknown to him.

For the language of Nice—of the Niçois—is not French of Paris; neither is it Italian, as Florentines use. It is compounded of both, with provincialisms interspersed, and with a large admixture of that old Provençal in which troubadours sang and wooed.

As to amusements, the guide-books and the *concierges* will say all that is necessary—and more. There is the Cercle de la Méditerranée, to which men will of course subscribe; and if Monte Carlo does not satisfy them in the matter of play, there is a club at Nice, which the writer will not help them to find out, where they may amuse themselves in this way to the full. There is the Opera, and there is the Théâtre Français; and especially there is, in the Cours, Visconti’s great rendezvous, where everybody is to be seen, and every newspaper that is, is to be read. There are concerts, there are balls, and there are *réunions*, which, like the brook, ‘go on for ever.’ In short, amusements are plentiful and of all sorts—from hill-climbing to love-making. Between these two comes a wide range of occupations adapted to the most fastidious tastes, including that of losing or winning your own or some one else’s fortune, at the tables of Monte Carlo.

That winter resort, however, is much too important to be included at the fag end of a chapter.

FRANCIS DAVENANT.

BEHIND THE SCENES IN LONDON SOCIETY.

I. THE GHOSTS OF LONDON MIDNIGHT.

It was in the neighbourhood of the Old Kent-road—for reasons which will presently appear I should be scarcely justified in more particularly specifying its whereabouts—that I was glad to come in view of the twinkling lamps of one of those friendly havens of refreshment and refuge which gladden the heart of the nocturnal pedestrian—a public coffee-booth.

Any man might, under the circumstances, have been glad. The night—or rather the early morning, for it was nearly two o'clock—was black and bleak, and there was a drenching drizzle of rain falling. I have nothing to say for or against the beverage which was served steaming hot from the can under which a ruddy charcoal fire burnt briskly, further than to remark that it would be hardly reasonable to expect a decoction of first-rate Mocha at the rate of a penny the full half-pint. At that untimely hour, however, and in such bitterly cold weather, we were, I have no doubt, all of us grateful for a drink of it: 'all of us' consisting of a policeman, two sisters of misfortune, and a white-faced hollow-cheeked man, wearing a tall black hat much the worse for wear, and a dilapidated black coat tightly buttoned up to his chin, and further remarkable by exhibiting, by accident I believe, the end of a flute sticking out between the buttoning at the breast. As for the coffee-stall keeper himself, he was not the kind of person whose cheerful mien gave an additional

relish to the viands he dispensed. On the contrary, he was, although not an old or even elderly man, one who, judging from his saturnine aspect, had 'supped full' of worldly disappointment, which seemed to lead him into the strange habit of attentively regarding his customers when they were unaware of it, as though he were an experimental chemist, and anxious to see the effect on them of a 'dose' furtively introduced into their coffee-cup. There was bread-and-butter and cake on his hospitable board, and I was about to help myself to a slice of the former when he stayed my hand.

'Have cake instead,' he remarked, in a moody whisper: 'it makes no difference to me; but that's my advice.'

'I prefer bread-and-butter,' I replied.

'Enough said, then;' and he shrugged his shoulders, in intimation of his perfect indifference in the matter. 'If you like it, have it. Don't say I didn't mention it, that's all. Don't take a bite at it, and then declare that you can't eat it and won't pay for it, because it isn't the best Aylesbury. It won't run to the best Aylesbury at a ha'penny a slice.'

He gave utterance to these jerky remarks with so much asperity that I had it at my tongue's tip to mildly rebuke him for his unjust insinuations. Next moment, however, I was glad I had not done so.

'Them that can't eat such bread-and-butter as that ought to know what it is to be real hungry; what do you say, Emma?'

Thus spoke one of the women already mentioned; and in reply said her companion, with so earnest a shake of her head that the rain that had saturated the flowers in her blowy bonnet was sprinkled with a hiss on the charcoal fire,

'Lord A'mighty! you may well say that, lass; I'd be glad of the chance of tucking into as much as I liked just now!'

Without a word the sour-visaged coffee-stall keeper turned about, and, producing from a little cupboard five alices which evidently had been once bitten and summarily rejected by dissatisfied customers, he proceeded to distribute them. He gave two each to the women, and then, holding the remaining slice between his finger and thumb, looked askance towards the dilapidated owner of the flute. The latter was quick at divining his meaning.

'Sooner than it should go begging, I don't care if I do,' said he, with something of a laugh and a wink round on the company generally, as though he wished it to be understood that he took the bread for the mere fun of the thing. He lost no time in disposing of it, however: folding it over in three, as one folds a sheet of note-paper for the envelope, his mouth received it, and in an instant it had vanished. By this time I was convinced that the coffee-stall keeper was an uncommon man of his class. I therefore ordered another cup of his coffee, for the sake of lingering there; his other customers had taken their departure. The policeman, helping himself to a couple of lumps of sugar (he had not paid for his coffee and cake), was the last to go.

'You must witness some strange phases of life,' I ventured to remark to the coffee-man, now that

the coast was clear. 'You no doubt have opportunities of seeing and conversing with people of a kind that the daylight world has no idea even of the existence of.'

He had commenced to wash up his cups and saucers when I began to address him, and he paused with a half-wiped cup and a towel in his hands to regard me with a look of surprise not, as I thought, unmixed with suspicion.

'Is that an old idea of yours,' he presently asked, 'or has it just now come into your head?'

I replied that it was a reflection that might occur to any one, and that I hoped my giving utterance to it gave him no offence.

'But what I should like to know,' said he, desisting entirely from his occupation and folding his arms on his counter—'what I should like to know is, what might be your opinion of what a man should do with the queer kind of knowledge he might pick up in the way you are speaking of, supposing he got together a whole lot of it?'

I told him that there was but one way of doing justice to a mass of material such as he spoke of, and that was to put it in book-form and get it published.

'Make a volume of it, you mean, I suppose?' said he correctly.

'Exactly.'

'Do you think *you* could do it? Come now; supposing that you has my opportunities, do you think you could?'

'Possibly not; but still—'

'You couldn't,' he interrupted me, in a positive tone; 'you might think that you could, but you couldn't.'

'But what makes you so positive?'

'Because,' he replied, sinking his voice to a grim whisper—'because I've tried it.'

'And failed?

'And failed,' he repeated impressively; 'so now you know what sort of chance you'd have.'

After such unimpeachable testimony as to the impossibility of the thing, there was of course no good in further argument. I therefore merely remarked that I was glad to have an erroneous impression dissipated in so conclusive a manner.

'Don't mention it,' he returned blandly; 'it might be useful to you, if it comes to that; for there's more human vanity and conceit runs in the direction of volume-writing than in any other I know of; and you might be hankering after a try. Don't. Look at me. I'm a living monument of what comes of it. I wouldn't mention it to everybody, and so don't you,' he continued, when he had allowed himself fully a minute to regard the effect on me of his last astounding observation; 'but it is a fact. P'raps you think that I was brought up to this line of business?

I informed him, what was really the fact, that, since he had put it into my head to consider the matter at all, I had had grave doubts of it.

'You are right,' said he gratefully; 'it's a treat to meet with a man of penetration. No; I was not brought up to it. I was brought into it. It was that identical idea of making a volume that did my business, and made me a coffee-stall keeper whether I liked it or no. I was in a good situation when the maggot bit me. I was always fond of reading, you must know. I read Dickens, and Ainsworth, and them kind of authors, till at last I got into my head that I could do it. It appeared to me that if I could only get my characters together, there'd be no more difficulty in

making up a book than a tailor finds in making a coat when he's got the cloth to commence with. I used to wander about of nights, puzzling and puzzling over it, and that's how I came to look in at coffee-stalls. One night it came to me all on a sudden—*this* is the kind of thing for you! Keep a coffee-stall! You won't need to go hunting after "characters" then; they will come to you, and you can contemplate and study 'em at your leisure.'

'A most ingenious idea,' I remarked, seeing that he wished me to say something at this juncture.

'That's what I thought. I was struck so of a heap by it, in a manner of speaking, that I set about working it out at once. I bought a coffee-stall business of a man up Paddington way for seven-pun'-ten, the notion being to keep it going for a couple of months or so until I got the characters for my literary venture all in order, and then to sell the business again for what it would fetch, and go in for story-writing. And, Lord! you know,' he exclaimed, warming with the subject and speaking with increased energy, 'there is no doubt in the world that the idea was a good one, if one could only hit on the proper way to work it. It didn't turn out well for me, because I lost my situation at the cork-cutter's in consequence of not being able to keep my eyes open all day and all night as well, and so was thrown back entirely on the stall, having nothing else to depend on for a living. But there really ought to be something in it. You don't happen to know anything about the way of it, I suppose, sir?

'How do you mean, the way of it?

'Well, you see,' returned the coffee-stall keeper, stirring his

hair slowly with his fingers and looking out vaguely into the darkness of night, 'I shouldn't be surprised if double-entry was the secret of it.'

'In what respect?'

'Well, you hear of double-entry being brought to bear in book-keeping, and I shouldn't wonder if it was something of the same in book-writing. There seems to be—leastways, speaking for myself—an entry in a man's head for the ideas of a volume to get admission into; but the job is for them to find their way out again when they're called on to do so, if you can make that out.'

I was compelled to confess that I could not make it out exactly.

'What I mean is, that when a character comes before me I am able to spot him at once. Man or woman, it makes no difference. "You'll do for a character in the volume," I say to myself. Maybe it's a female; and, dear heart! you would be astonished at the number of the kind of that sex that drop in here in the middle of the night. Not of the kind you saw here a while ago—they're common as blackberries on the hedges, poor creatures! but well-bred and brought-up parties, mind you; dragged down to the lowest, but still with the nature of the lady, what was first planted in 'em plain enough to be discovered through all the artificial overlaying. They'll come here, sir, and behave in a way that makes a man shiver, and cause him to look in the paper next morning for an account of a suicide from the bridge. I assure you, sir, I've had more opportunities than I required of getting characters of that class for that there book of mine.'

'They make you acquainted with their miserable history sometimes, I suppose?'

'A kind word when they are regularly down and broken-hearted brings them out wonderfully, poor things. I've heard stories from their lips, sir, enough almost to make a man hate himself for being a man. But they are not the most curious sort I have to deal with occasionally,' he added, shaking his head gravely. 'When I think of the queer customers I have had to deal with since I kept a night coffee-stall, it seems that that book, if it ever comes out, should have a chapter or two in it about ghosts.'

'Why about ghosts?'

'Well, midnight spectres—unaccountable beings, both men and women, who seem to hide in a mysterious kind of way all day long, and to come out about midnight, to wander about with nothing to do but to pray for daylight—if they dare to pray at all—so that they may sink back to their vaults, or their churchyards, or wherever they live when they are at home.'

'But you must not forget that there are hundreds of persons who are compelled by their honest business to be abroad at unseemly hours.'

'That I'm aware of, sir,' replied the coffee-stall keeper, sinking his voice to a whisper, and peering out into the dark, as though he half suspected that one of the 'queer customers' he had alluded to might be lurking somewhere in the immediate neighbourhood; 'but the sort you speak of behave in a honest straightforward way. But what would you think, for instance, of a customer, if one can be called such who begs a cup of coffee, not having the money to pay for it, who confides to you in a secret kind of way that he wants to kill himself, and has tried, and that there is some invisible power that won't let him?'

'It would require some tolerably strong evidence to convince me that such a man was not an impostor or a madman,' I replied.

'Tolerably strong evidence!' he repeated, his eyes expanding and his face assuming a horrified expression at the mere remembrance; 'why, so I had it. It is a year and a half ago now, in the middle of summer time. A tall dark man he was, not old, though his hair was gray, and his face white as chalk. It was at the quietest time o' night—about two, say—and I was here by myself. He had been running, I think, for he could scarcely speak when he slipped in, waking me out of a doze. "Give me—I do not say sell me—give me a little something warm to drink, for humanity's sake!" he exclaimed, sinking down on to the form, and covering his face with his hands. Of course it wouldn't do to be free in giving to every one who asked, but in a business like mine there are some sort of people that you'd best be quickly rid of, though at a sacrifice. I looked on him as one of them, and handed him a cup of coffee, and as I did so I saw by the light of my lamp that he was reeking wet. His hair and face were smeared with gray mud, and the ends of his black neckerchief seemed stuck to his shirt-front with it, and at his feet where he sat there was a pool of water which still was trickling from his clothes. "Why, man alive!" said I—it's a common expression of mine—"man alive," said I, "you've been in the river!" He took his hands from his white face and gave me a look I shall never forget, as he answered bitterly, "Yes, man alive, thanks to the curse that is on me. Only that I am helpless it should have been man dead a week ago. You," said he, glaring at me, "would

think it hard to be doomed to die!" I'm not a nervous man, but I slipped the bread-knife out of his reach as I replied that I'd like a few years longer, if it didn't put any one to inconvenience. "Then pray to the Lord," he said, springing to his feet, "that you may never be condemned to a worse fate! Pray that you may never be doomed to live in spite of yourself, and want to die, and try to die, and find that Death will have nothing to do with you. Do I wish to live?" he cried, in a voice loud enough for the policeman at the corner of the road to have heard him; "look here, man!" and he tore open the front of his muddy shirt, and showed me on his bare breast a wound such as a stab with a knife might make, "does this show it? Ha, ha! why, I did not even bleed. Can a leap from the centre of London Bridge into the black river below end a poor wretch's life? I leapt, I did—I who never in my life swam a yard or knew how; I leapt sheer in the middle of the stream, and somehow—somehow," he repeated, in a tone that made me shiver, "I awoke to consciousness on the mud of the shore as full as before of hateful life—the hateful life to which I am chained and fettered!" And with that and not another word he took himself off as hurriedly as he had come in, leaving me so confused in mind that, only for his half-emptied cup and the pool of water on the ground, I might have persuaded myself that it was a dream.'

'A madman, no doubt,' I remarked, as he brought the strange narrative to a close.

'Mind you, I don't answer for the sanity of any of the night spectres we're speaking of,' continued the coffee-stall keeper, laying a detaining hand on my

arm, for I had made a move as for going; 'but I have had 'em not so mad but what they have become regular customers. For over three weeks—and what I'm going to tell you now happened not more than eight or nine months ago—I had a customer regularly every night, that was as good as seven shillings a week to me. A woman it was, a lady, not one of the unfortunate order, but real. Middle aged she was, as far as I could see through her thick black veil, and tall, with a dark cloak that covered her from her throat to her shoes. It was snowy weather and bitter cold when I first set eyes on her—there were customers in at the time—walking rapidly past and looking in each time. At last, when they had all cleared out, she came in herself, and asked for some bread and some tea, which she ate and drank as famished like as though she had had no food all day, but without raising her veil. "Have you the day's newspaper?" she asked. "No, ma'am; we don't have any call for newspapers in my line." "Can you get me the one that is published to-morrow, that I may see it to-morrow night?" "If you'll leave the money I will, ma'am." So she said no more, but with a hand such as only a born and bred lady can have, white as paper, and lovely and taper, she took a half-crown from her purse and away she went. Well, on the next night she came—I was on the look-out for her—walking to and fro until I was here by myself, and again she had bread and tea, eating it ravenous, as on the first occasion. I'd got the *Times* all ready for her. She took it eager enough, but she didn't keep it two minutes. The column she turned to was the police-news column, and she just glanced over

that, and then put the paper down in a way that told me she had not found what she wanted. "I'll come again to-morrow night," she said, "and get me the newspaper again, please;" and down she puts another half-crown, and goes off in a hurry.

'Well, sir, believe me she kept on that game for one-and-twenty nights, excepting Sundays, when there was no police-news to read, always coming in the same way, and dressed in the cloak and the black veil; always biding her time until she could have the stall to herself for a few minutes; always ordering bread and tea, and invariably taking it ravenous. At last one night she came—past one o'clock it was—and ate and drank and looked at the paper, but this time with a difference; for no sooner did she clap eyes on the police intelligence than, uttering a cry and with her white hands shaking, she tore the page out, and crushing it up in her hands darted off with it.'

'Well?' said I, finding that he did not go on.

'That was the last of her, sir. Whoever she was and what her mysterious business might have been, she never came after that. I felt so curious about it, that I got a *Times* next morning and looked over the police news, but there was nothing there to account for her queer behaviour. I recollect what the cases were. There was one for forgery, one for riding in a second-class carriage with a third-class ticket, two cases of pocket-picking, and a case of a undertaker on whose premises was found a young baby in a coffin, and there seemed a bit of a muddle how he had come by it. And it didn't seem likely that she could have had any concern with anything there.'

I did not venture an opinion,

but it struck me as not impossible that my coffee-vending friend had not sufficiently considered the last item of the list he had quoted.

'Why, there's dozens of these unaccountable customers I could call to mind if it was worth while,' he continued, after a short pause. 'Just about the end of last year there used to drop in here every Friday night, as regularly as clockwork between twelve and one, an old woman—precious old to be sure she seemed—with an old-fashioned coalscuttle bonnet and a crutched stick just like that Mother Shipton has in the picture of her. I never saw a more ugly old woman, and she looked all the uglier from always coming in company with as sweet a little creature of a child, a girl of five or six years old say, as ever you set eyes on; a delicate blue-eyed little thing, with hair like yellow-floss silk, nearly all tucked away into the dark-cloth hood she wore, and with a complexion that, compared with the old woman's, was the whitest marble against Spanish mahogany. She didn't seem unkind to the child, but let it eat and drink what it wished for; but the old woman herself never on any occasion ate or drank a morsel, though on every occasion of her Friday night's visit she seemed and the child too as though they had tramped a very long way, being wet with the rain or dusty with the dust, as the weather might be. There was no fear of them taking cold, however, for they were both, and especially the little girl, well shod and as warmly clad as need be. But the puzzle to me was what two such strange companions wanted out of a night together. At last—that was after they had paid me ten or a dozen visits—there came in a man while they were there, and as

soon as he saw the old woman he looked towards me and winked in a way I didn't understand. The old woman must have seen him wink, for all in a moment she took the little girl by the hand, and hobbled off with her as quick as her legs would move her bent old body. "You know who that is?" the man asked me. "No, I don't," said I. "Well," says he, "that's old Mother Mutch of Stepney. She's sold herself to the devil; but the bargain was, that when the old un wanted her he was to fetch her out of her bed at midnight, and that time to be put off as long as she could get a child who had not yet shed its milk-teeth to be her companion. She could roll in money if she liked; and she is under a promise to leave it all to that little girl when her time comes. It is to stave off that time that she never sleeps in her bed of nights, but wanders about London from dark till daylight with the little child with her." Now what do you think of that?" asked the coffee-stall keeper.

'What did Mother Mutch say the next time she came?' I asked.

'She never came after that time when she saw the man wink, which I think looks black against her. At all events I've got her down as a witch in the characters I'm trying to get together for the volume, and chance it. But the very oddest experience I ever did have since I have kept a stall of nights was—'

But at that moment a cabman drove up with two tipsy gentlemen who required refreshment, and I made the occasion an excuse for bidding good-bye to the man of midnight spectres, at the same time wishing him luck in his literary enterprise should he ever launch it.

MARRIED BY ACCIDENT.

DICK OSBORNE was not exactly fortunate in his university career, which is a euphemism for saying that it was everything the reverse. He spent all his money, he wasted all his time, he was reprimanded, he was rusticated, he was plucked. It became an open question in the mind of Richard whether he should enlist in the army or drive a hansom. Fortunately a third course was indicated to him by a friend — he might turn private tutor. I once heard of a man who was on the verge of bankruptcy, but was saved from it by the following ingenious plan: he advertised for pupils at three hundred a year, and got a dozen of them. People thought that if such a price was asked something good must surely be imparted. The advertisement, which a friend of Dick's brought to him, stated that a private tutor was wanted to prepare a young gentleman for matriculation and the previous examination at an English university. Now it was quite true that Dick Osborne had been ploughed for Greats, but then nobody could deny that he had passed prosperously through Smalls. The fact that he had been ploughed for Greats was not one which he was bound to obtrude upon public attention. The decision of the matter virtually rested with the young gentleman himself, who, being greatly pleased with some traits in Dick's character which had not been equally pleasing to Dick's academic superiors, insisted on having Mr. Osborne, and nobody else, for his private tutor. It was true that Dick knew next

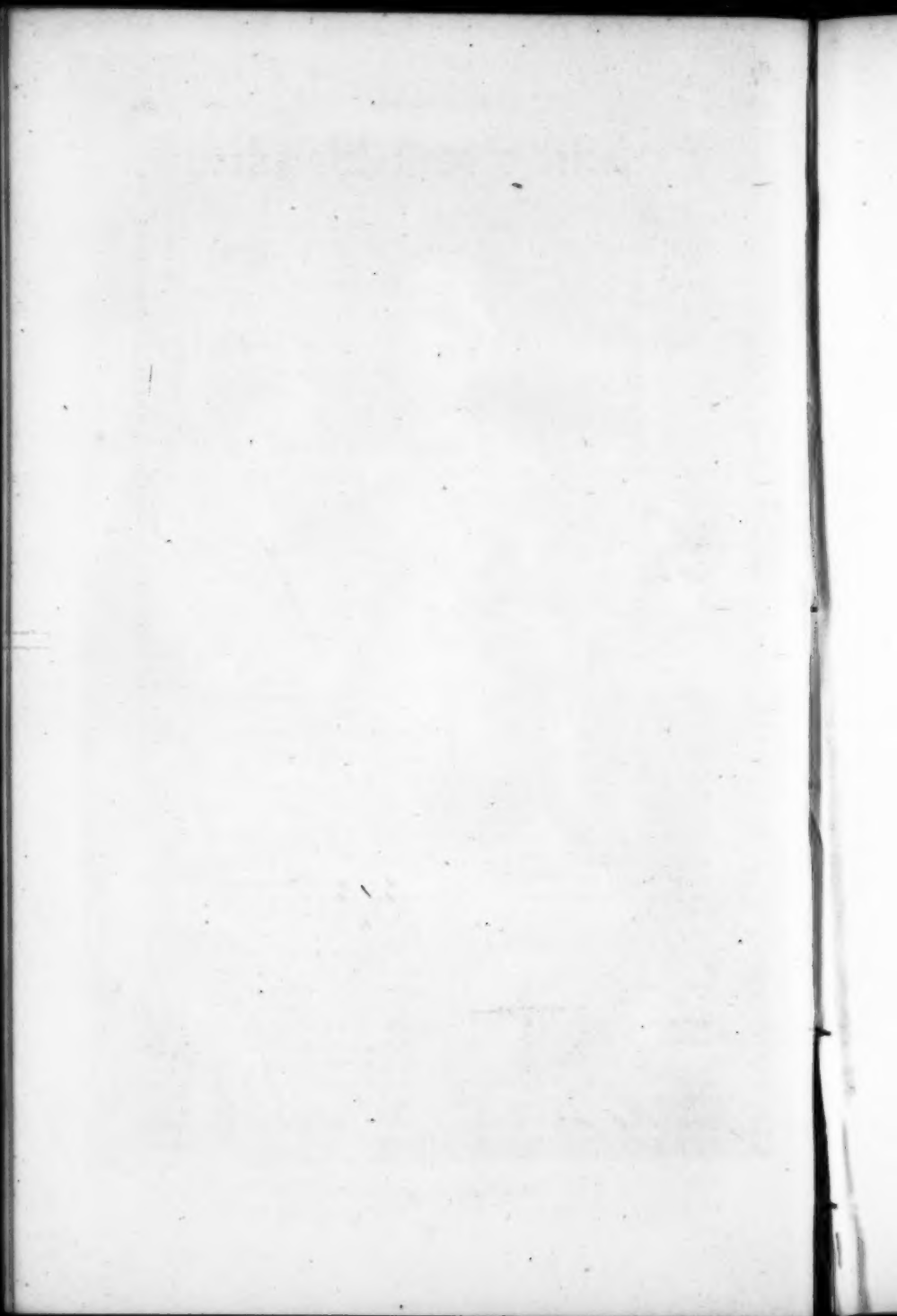
to nothing, but, as his pupil knew absolutely nothing, the mental superiority ultimately rested with Dick.

The tutor and pupil went down to Wingfield Hall. The odd thing was that Wingfield Hall did not belong to the pupil, but to his sister. The brother had a hall of his own with ever so much shooting, but being a minor it was let off to some Leeds manufacturer. The father had married a lady with a large landed estate, which was settled on the younger children of the marriage. There was only one child, a girl, who became an heiress, as her mother had been an heiress before her. It was of course only very gradually that the exact bearings of things became known to young Osborne. I must also do him the justice to say that when the fact became known to Mr. Osborne, instead of stimulating any tendency in the direction of heiress-hunting, it had a directly contrary effect. Dick rightly considered that grapes of this kind hung a good deal beyond his reach, and that it would be better for him to limit himself to the legitimate enjoyments of his surroundings; for his lines had certainly fallen to him in pleasant places. His pupil was a very backward delicate lad; and as he had the faculty of forgetting everything as fast as he learned it, no early date could be assigned to the termination of Mr. Osborne's services. He had already continued at Wingfield Hall for a twelve-month when certain circumstances arose which I am about to relate. The real mistress of the Hall was



MARRIED BY ACCIDENT.

See the Story.



hardly its nominal mistress; for an active aunt bore sway, and had done so for years. Lucy Harlowe was a quiet, imaginative, retiring, simple-hearted girl, who, wrapt up in her own quiet ways and accustomed to leave everything to her energetic and self-asserting aunt, against whose yoke, however, she occasionally felt inclined to rebel, hardly asserted or even realised her true position. A gentleman is almost a necessity in a household, and, beyond his tutorial duties, Mr. Osborne made himself useful in a variety of ways which were sources of interest and occupation to himself. He looked after the horses, he kept the gardener and coachman in order, he had a keen eye for plantations and preserves, and in company with his pupil he did a good deal of fishing and shooting. Indeed these were very properly regarded as essential points in young Harlowe's education, as peculiarly adapted to fit him for that future destiny in life which he was intended to adorn. So Dick was quiet, harmless, and happy as a general rule, though a little weak-brained, as might be conjectured from his history, and with a whole store of susceptibilities and sensitivenesses. His natural tendency would have been to flirt with Lucy Harlowe, whom he really liked very much; but he had spent his little all, and looked with dismay on any chance that would drive him from his warm corner into the cold of the outer world. In the shooting season various gentlemen came to join in the Wingfield shootings; for the aunt rightly considered that the society of country gentlemen was a proper thing for her nephew, and would probably provide a befitting husband for her niece. The aunt, with all her imperiousness, was an honest woman, and wished to

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do her duty according to her lights. The gentlemen came, two gentlemen especially, Squire Dorrington and Major Fitzpatrick, who liked the shooting, the lunch in the preserves, the late dinner. They were rather puzzled and jealous about Dick Osborne's position in the household. He was only the tutor; but then all in the neighbourhood had discovered that he was something more besides. These gentlemen had found out that Osborne was a simple-hearted fellow, and had resolved to 'draw' him for their own behoof and satisfaction.

They were two very artful men, the Major and the Squire. They sat in the smoking-room, going in respectively for sherry-and-seltzer and for brandy-and-soda. The pupil, not over-strong, had been ordered to bed by the aunt hours before.

They were both of them clever gentlemanly fellows in their way. Dick could not help feeling a kind of awe of them. They were handsome, he was not; clever, he was not; dressed in the very best style, he was not; thoroughly men of the world, he was not; plenty of money in their pockets, which was certainly not the case with him. They made him partake of the brandy-and-soda, they made him partake of the sherry-and-seltzer. Dick became slightly excited. His imagination took a broader range.

'You're very much in clover here, Mr. Richard Osborne,' said the Major.

'It does very well for a stop-gap,' answered Mr. Richard. 'I must do something till I can take my degree and get called to the bar.'

This was Osborne's professed object in life, but he was himself giving up belief in it.

'You're a clever dog,' said the Major.

D

'And he's a deep dog, too,' said the Squire. 'What a capital plan for a fellow to get shut up with Lucy Harlowe, to pretend to be a tutor to her brother! Why that gives you an opportunity of seeing her every day of your life! What wouldn't some of us give to have a chance like that?'

Dick was astonished to hear such deep designs imputed to him. He felt that it was something like profanation, however, that such a conversation should go on in the sanctuary of that home. He admired her, but he admired her like the Victoria Regia in the conservatory pond, or the vesper star at an immeasurable distance beyond sea and air.

He hastened to assure his new friends of the perfect rectitude and straightforwardness of his views and intentions.

'But it would be very nice if you could come in and hang up your hat in the hall as the master of everything—the house and the grounds and the young lady.'

In this remark the metropolitan Major was only reproducing his own state of mind. He was tired of those small rooms in Jermyn-street, though backed up with a couple of clubs. It would be very sweet to have a *piéd à terre* in the country, especially if it took the shape of a real hall with a rent-roll of three good farms to back it.

The Squire had his estate, but only a squire can understand the loveliness of annexing the next estate and enclosing them both in a ring-fence. The joy of annexing the young woman would be nothing in comparison.

'Have you ever tried it on with her?' said the Major. 'Ah, Mr. Dick, Mr. Dick Osborne, you are a deep fellow! You university men are the fellows to get on with

the ladies. You beat us Rag-and-Famish fellows hollow.'

Dick blushed a radiant blush. The character of a deep dog was one by no means to be despised.

'Well, I say just what I think,' said the Squire. 'She's a very nice young woman, and any fellow might do worse than be tied up to her, especially when Wingfield Hall is to be part of the bargain.'

Dick thought she certainly was a nice young woman, one of the nicest ladies whom he had ever met in his career. To give him his due, he really thought more of the young lady than he did of the old hall.

A notion was put into Dick's honest head which had never deliberately found place there before. He thought it would be very nice to fall in love with Lucy Harlowe. That might be agreed on all hands. Great swells as might be the Squire and the Major, they could not make a better match. His cheek tingled at the thought of such a match. But however easy it might be to fall in love with Lucy, the difficulty remained of making Lucy fall in love with him.

'The fact of it is,' said the designing Major, who liked nothing better than to befool a fellow and play a practical joke, a taste derived from early army days,—'the fact of it is that the girl's half spoony on you already. Don't you think so, Dorrington?' he asked his neighbour.

Dorrington caught the cue at once.

'Think it!' he exclaimed; 'why, to any fellow who knows a bit of life, the thing is as plain as a pikestaff. I have seen something of that sort of thing in my time, and nobody could mistake it.'

Now both the Squire and the Major had some touch of selfishness at the bottom of this chaff.

When a man is his own centre of the universe (and this is so with most of us), it is impossible that the case should be otherwise. The Major had seriously determined that he would have a 'go in' for the heiress. But he had the wit to keep his own counsel from both the other men. The idea began to loom before his eyes that he would get Dick Osborne to propose, if he could. That Dick could possibly be accepted did not enter his mind for a moment. He made no doubt that Dick would be turned out of the house at once. Serve him right for his impudence. That Dick might be utterly ruined formed no part of his calculations. The Major knew that there was danger in proximity, and he thought he would remove the young gentleman, of whose presence he greatly disapproved.

Mr. Dorrington had also his ideas. He had truly interpreted the Major's wink, and thought he saw his way into a practical joke. When the young lady had thrown off a rubbishy proposal, she would better be able to appreciate a proposal of the right sort.

In poetry and fiction we have memorable instances of tutors marrying heiresses. This is the case in Currer Bell's *Shirley*. This is the case in Mrs. Browning's *Lady Geraldine*. I do not know if honest Richard Osborne was acquainted with these precedents. They might have given him a gleam of encouragement. But I suppose these things happen much more frequently in fable than in reality. Dick might have been ready enough to propose if he had the least tangible basis to go upon.

'The fact of the matter is, Mr. Osborne,' said the Major, 'you're afraid.'

Now Dick Osborne belonged to just that bull-dog order of

Englishmen to whom the words 'You're afraid,' especially when coming from a military man, who is supposed to be afraid of nothing, are simply maddening.

'You can't deny that you're fond of the young woman,' said the Squire judicially, lighting up his cigar.

Dick hardly knew his own mind; but he did not venture to deny the soft impeachment.

'Then why don't you tell her so, like a man?—I am afraid the Major's about right when he says you're afraid.'

'I shouldn't mind making her an offer if I had made up my mind to do it,' said Dick.

'Lay you a pony you don't do anything of the sort, and that's twenty-five skiv.'

'Done with you,' said Dick.

I am afraid there was a mixture of motives; bravado, a false shame of not shrinking from a money-bet, and perhaps some allowance for soda-and-brandied, might be among the elements of this sudden determination.

Accordingly Dick sat down to concoct his letter. His friends would have given him every assistance, but on this occasion he decided to trust entirely to his own swimming, and not to any corks or bladders that might be devised for him. Thus he wrote:

'Dear Miss Harlowe, or rather dearest Miss Harlowe, if you will allow me to say so,—Although I am only a poor man, and your brother's tutor, I am a human being, and cannot help falling in love with you. My family is as old a family as any, and at school and college I was thought as good a fellow as any other fellow. I think I could make you happy. I would strive very hard to do so. So will you marry

'RICHARD OSBORNE'

Dick thought this way of finishing was a great literary master-stroke. He was very shy of showing the letter to the men, but they insisted that on the terms of the bet they had a clear right to see that a direct intelligible offer was really made. So Osborne showed them the last line, which was of course sufficient for all practical purposes.

'That's all straight,' said one man.

'That's the direct tip,' said the other.

The next question that arose was, how was the letter to be delivered? and how was it to be clearly ascertained that it had been delivered? But just at this moment there was a light step by the door, which being a little ajar disclosed the lithe figure of Florence, the handsome lady's-maid.

'O Florence, you're wanted here. There's something for you to do,' said the Major. 'Mr. Osborne will tell you what it is.'

Florence came demurely into the room, not unwilling to obtain some little portion of admiration from the three gentlemen. Such is the nature of Florences.

'It is only something that I have to give Miss Harlowe. Please let her have it.'

'Take care to put it on her dressing-table, that she may find it when she goes to bed,' said the Major.

Florence stretched out her hand for letter, or parcel, or anything else that the article might be; but Richard Osborne felt wonderfully reluctant to give it up. He felt like a man who was about to clear a chasm or leap from the rock into the sea.

'Out with it, old man,' said the Major.

'The longer you look at it, the less you'll like it,' said the other.

A neglected poet of the last century has spoken of a hero

'Who, without *buts* or *ifs*,
Jump'd into the sea from off the cliffs.'

But Dick was not that hero. The whole enormity of that proceeding came vividly before his mind. He had far better lose those twenty-five sovereigns. Yes, he could touch his quarter's stipend, and it would be that exactly. What, then, about the outlying tics? For I need hardly say that Dick was just the sort of good fellow who lives in a chronic state of outlying tics. With the receipt of the quarter's stipend he would bid farewell to any further quarterly stipends, at least from this source. Above all, what would be Miss Harlowe's feelings if she ever learned that she had thus been made the subject of a bet of this sort?

He had handed forth the fatal letter in an irresolute way. The Major had quickly caught it from his grasp and handed it over to the waiting-maid.

'Here, Florence; look sharp and take it up-stairs, and lay it on the dressing-table.'

Florence saw there was some fun going. She gave a laugh of glee, and bounded up-stairs. Richard rose from his seat and bounded after her. Then the Squire caught hold of his coat-tail. The coat-tail might probably have given way, but the Major laid firm grasp upon his arm. In the mean time Florence entered her mistress's room, and, just showing herself on the top of the staircase, disappeared in the *penetralia* of the mansion.

'Poor Richard'—for he might well appropriate to himself the title of that historical personage—felt positively sick and ill. He was not sorry when the Major and the Squire, with all sorts of grins

and grimaces, took their leave for the night.

Poor Dick could hardly rest. He took a turn in the grounds, threading the shrubbery and pacing the lawn. He watched the light in her room; he watched her figure moving before the blind. At last the light was extinguished and he went indoors. He went indoors, but not to sleep; he tossed about restlessly. Hereally thought that he had done for himself. He must bid adieu to the very comfortable quarters where he was so pleasantly ensconced from the cares of life. But I must do Dick the justice of saying that this was not the primary consideration. Dick had worked himself into a sort of fever. He was seriously in love, or thought he was seriously in love. For the first and last time in his life he began to compose some poetry. It is a curious psychological fact that the love-fever quickens the mind, and makes dull people quite intellectual for the time being. Theirs is a constant repetition of the fable of Cymon and Iphigenia. Cymon wrote in that thorough state of despair which is so congenial for the production of poetry.

'The meanest hind that ploughs the lea
To-night is crown'd in dreams of
bliss;

But love's bright gaze is not for me,
And not for me affection's kiss.

Enough that I alone should sigh,
And muse o'er pleasures banish'd
past,

And watch with an unquiet eye
Till the grey sky is flush'd at last.'

These are some of the very egotistical lines. They are not so very bad, I am inclined to maintain; but then Dick threw into this one supreme effort all the poetry of a life-time.

The two gentlemen had bedrooms that night at the Hall. All assembled at a late breakfast next morning, and one or two

slightly curious glances were interchanged between the Major and the Squire. Lucy Harlowe retained, however, her usual quiet impassive attitude, except that perhaps her dark eyelashes shaded her cheek a little more demurely that morning. The visitors, after their breakfast, smoked their cigars, and dawdled about the kennels, and then rode off in different directions. Richard Osborne kept himself extremely quiet that day, and applied himself to his pupil with great assiduity. The thought occurred to him, should he write a note and recall that former one, and beg pardon, and ask that the whole matter of his unfortunate mistake should be buried in oblivion? But somehow Dick resolved that this should not be the case. He had crossed the Rubicon, he had burned his boats, he had dared the giddy leap, he had trusted his last coin to the throw of the dice, he had done whatever is most desperate in the annals of desperation. He would wait quietly. It was not often that he was left alone with the young lady, for that chaperoning aunt was vigilant enough. But the chance would come, and indeed at any moment Florence the waiting-maid might bring him a note in answer to his own.

He did not have long to wait. The chance soon came. The aunt was not coming down to dinner. She was rather fatigued with entertaining visitors, and had slightly over-eaten herself with very high game. So Dick found himself alone in the drawing-room, in the mixed lights of twilight and firelight. To him enters Lucy, who goes straight up to him and lays her hand on his, and looks earnestly at him, and says:

'Richard—Mr. Osborne—did you really mean that letter?'

The moment of moments was

come! Richard Osborne threw to the winds any thought of backing out of the transaction.

'I do indeed, Lucy; I cannot help myself. I love you with all my heart.'

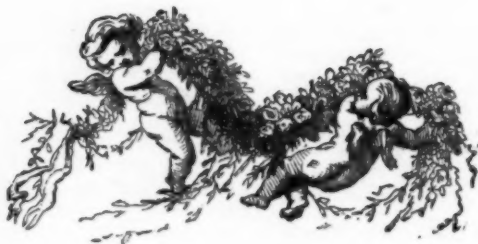
'O Richard,' said the girl, 'you are so kind and good and clever. It is very silly of me, but I could not help thinking a good deal of you for a long time.'

It is unnecessary to carry on the conversation beyond this point. Things were manifestly tending in one direction. The aunt did not quite like it, but Miss Harlowe was her own mistress; and the aunt thought it judicious to give way. When the engagement was made public, the Major sent his cheque for twenty-five pounds to Dick Osborne, and it came in handy.

'How on earth did such a girl as Lucy Harlowe manage to accept

Dick Osborne?' So asked the Major and the Squire, with deep feelings of indignation; and so have asked many others. It is one of those things which no fellow can understand. Though the Major paid the twenty-five pounds honourably, it was one of the bitterest pills which he ever had to swallow. Certainly Mr. Richard Osborne gained considerably by the transaction; but he made a good husband, a good father, a good squire, and finally a good member of parliament.

Squire Dorrington is married now. I am afraid that his wife has told the wife of Squire Osborne all about the matter of the bet. Also I am afraid that, though nominally the best of neighbours, Squire Dorrington voted against Squire Osborne at the last general election under the cover of the ballot.



FROM LONDON BRIDGE STATION TO CANNON-STREET.

BY ONE WHO HAS MADE THE JOURNEY.

INTRODUCTION.

PERCHANCE through wreaths of Channel spray
I may have seen the dawning day ;
Or may have dream'd my morning dream
By troubled Medway's broad'ning stream ;
Or by white roads, through cornfields riven,
My stout gray cob I may have driven
To lonely station 'mong the hops
Of Squire Callow, wise in crops ;
Or may a little botanising,
This morning, when the sun was rising,
Have done beneath the box or beeches
On Surrey hills ; or ripening peaches,
That bashful glow'd in high-wall'd garden,
I may have pluck'd at Chart or Marden.—
It matters not.—My train is due
At London Bridge ten twenty-two,
And now 'tis ten eighteen, and we
Already sniff sweet Bermondsey.
In bark and tan our senses revel,
And now we're on the Higher Level ;
And now we rush by chimney-pots ;
And now we pass familiar plots
Of market-gardens, shrinking smaller
While factory shafts each day grow taller.
And now the many lines converge,
And careful drivers onward urge
The panting engines, and the shrieking
Grows shriller. All the air is reeking
With boiling glue and tar and steam,
While deafening whistles puff and scream.
Exact to time, amongst this din,
Here's London Bridge ; and crowds rush in
And crowds rush out. And now the station
Again we leave, our destination
The City, on the other side
Of Father Thames. There ! see where ride
The masts within the mighty Pool !
Ah, like an urchin fresh from school,
At sight of LONDON once again
My old heart beats, and my dull brain
Grows sharper. In my wrinkled wrist
The quick pulse throbs. O, I have miss'd

You, City ! Yet my partners say,
'Why can't the old man keep away,
And scratch his little bit of land,
Or play with babies on the sand ?
We want him not ; let him retire.'
For, though they may conceal their ire
And ever blandly to me speak,
They grudge my coming once a week.
O London, when my hair was brown
For thee I left my warm tuck'd-down
On winter-mornings while 'twas dark,
As well beseem'd a junior clerk.
Jack Graves and I, two smart young sparks,
What games we had—what larks ! what larks !
I still remember one day how—
Well, well,—that interests no one now !
And there were Jobson, Jones, and Lowe—
All dead and buried years ago.
O London, when my hair was gray
With heat and burden of the day,
In you I fought the hard-won fight
Of business-life, and toil'd for right
To prosperous home and honour'd age
And record on the civic page ;
And can I, now my locks are few,
No love, O City, have for you,
The place where I, 'mongst hopes and fears,
Have spent my fifty working years ?
No, rather would that I were fated
Within your bounds to be cremated ;
Or that, in soft-lined Hayden basket,
I might repose my worn-out casket
In that still green and hallow'd ground
Beside St. Saviour's, where the sound
Of rushing trains would never cease.
There could I lay me down in peace ;
While one who knew me, as he pass'd
Upon his daily way, and cast
His eye below, might oft exclaim,
'Ah, there lies poor old What's-his-name !'
There oft at eve St. Saviour's chimes
Would mingle with the hurried rhymes
Of piston-stroke and flying wheel
(Like airy treble-notes that steal
Above a bass of rapid measure) ;
There might I, in my endless leisure,
Rehearse old stories o'er and o'er,
And ne'er again be deem'd a bore.
For though a man of many cares,
Of bills and discount, stocks and shares,
And versed in all the devious ways
That commerce takes in these last days ;

Yet through my life, mid storm or shine,
I ne'er have been a Philistine
In toto; but have kept my mind
Open to such things as combined
The Past and Present; and such light
As I could gain from good Charles Knight,
That London-lover, have expended
Upon this little route, now ended
At Cannon-street, within the City.
Would you, then, listen to a ditty
That once I made, when home returning,
By this same line, while bright was burning
A summer-sunset, and the Thames
Was fleck'd about with living gems
Of rosy light! 'Tis of a time
When no bridge was, my little rhyme
Tells; and to some who by this road
Of iron come, and many a load
Of business bring or bear away
Upon their journey twice a day,
Its lines may help that load to lighten,
May serve a weary mile to brighten,
May link them to the long gone-by
Of this great City's infancy.

THE LEGEND OF ST. MARIE OVERIE'S, LONDON BRIDGE.

The beautiful cruciform church of St. Saviour's, Southwark, now so familiar to all who travel by the South-Eastern Railway from London Bridge to Cannon-street Station, belonged to the Augustinian Canons up to the time of the Dissolution of Monasteries, and was anciently known as St. Marie Overie. 'This church, or some other in the place thereof,' writes John Stow, 'was of old time, long before the Conquest, an house of sisters founded by a maiden named Mary.' There is no map of London so old as not to contain the tower and pinnacles of this venerable building. The following legend is given on the authority of Father Linated, the last Prior of St. Marie's.

PROLOGUE: LONDON BRIDGE, 1876.

UNDER the arches the tide runs strong
(Faintly are heard St. Saviour's chimes);
Over the arches the whole day long
Hurries unceasing a changing throng,
The grinding of wheels is its evensong,
Drowning St. Saviour's music.

Golden the sun on the City falls
(Over the river the sweet bells come),
Touching the bridges, the spires, the halls;
Greeting with glory the cross of St. Paul's;
Warming the coldness of gray prison-walls;
Lighting St. Saviour's belfry.

Out of the City the thousands pour
(Heard you not then St. Saviour's chimes?)—
Out from the bank, from the mart, the store—

Crowding the river, the bridge, the shore ;
Homeward they hasten, their day's work o'er.
Hear what the bells are ringing !

'Centuries long our pinnacles gray'
(This is the song of St. Saviour's chimes)
'Have watch'd the Bridge as we watch to-day ;
Have seen Old London grow and decay,
And New arise ; now we point you away—
Away to its misty beginning.'

THE LEGEND.

'Long ago, before any bridge was builded across the Thames, was there a ferry.'
Old Chronicle.

'Ah, woe is me ! The boat is gone ;
The night comes on full fast ;
The Thames is broad, the tide is strong,
And cannot be o'er-pass'd !

Two score of miles through woodland roads
Knee-deep in mud I've sped ;
And fain within fair London's walls
This night would lay my head.

Woe worth the day ! I cannot swim
Across that murky tide,
And ne'er a man of mortal mould
Might bridge that river wide.

So I, bereft of board and bed,
Must wander like a ghost
On *Suythé's** banks the live-long night,
Along this doleful coast.'

The traveller by the boat-house stood,
And look'd about him well ;
With wicked words he bann'd his fate—
With words we may not tell.

And as he gaped and glower'd about,
By chance he there espied
The boatman's daughter, fair to see,
Sweet-faced and bashful-eyed.

'O maiden,' cried he, 'help a wight
Much toas'd up and down ;
And pray your father that he may
Him ferry to yon town.'

'Now wit you well, fair sir,' she said,
'I fain would help you so ;
But father is a careful man,
And loud the night winds blow.

* *Suythé*, Surrey.

But yet, methinks, although 'tis late
And dark and rough and cold,
He would you carry if you'd turn
Your silver into gold.

I trow it is a deadly sin
To seek this poor world's pelf;
Alas, my father loves his gains
More than he loves himself.

Yet richer than an alderman
My father is,' quoth she;
'And hath he neither chick nor child
In all the world, save me.'

Now as these twain in converse were,
The boatman did arrive;
Who, when he heard the traveller's case,
Did hard his bargain drive.

But well content the young man went;
'For,' said he, 'though this Charon
A miser be, his daughter is
Sweet as a rose of Sharon.

Nor are her youth and piety
And beauty all her charms;
O, wealth she'll have when he doth lie
In Mother Earth's cold arms.'

And so it was that traveller
Full often from that eve
Did Mary Overs speak unto,
Without her father's leave.

And though within a convent's walls
The maiden had been school'd,
Yet had her heart one tender part,
And that her lover ruled.

Now day by day old Over's greed
Grows greater; and each night
He reckons up his gain, until
His sleep forsakes him quite.

Nor yet to gain alone he plans,
But how to save he tries;
And as he restless turns about
A scheme he doth devise:—

'Were I but dead, my men must fast
Three days; whereby I should
Much spending save in provender.
Alack, how dear is food!'

Miserly thought breeds miserly deed—
Quick-springing crop from poisonous seed.

Mary Overs, with all her beauty,
 All her wit and filial duty,
 Cannot turn him, though she tries.
 See, like a corpse, outstretch'd he lies !
 White the sheet that covers his frame,
 White the grave-cloth ; bright the flame
 Of tapers, burning as is meet,
 Two at his head and two at his feet ;

While on the bier
 Falls many a tear,

Which Mary Overs for shame doth shed
 (Shame for the living, not grief for the dead) ;
 But the sturdy churls, a rabble rout,
 When the news is heard, do laugh and shout ;
 And with many a scoff and many a grin,
 They break up the cellar, they break up the bin.
 Good brown ale and wine so clear,
 Carefully stored for many a year,
 Fall they upon and make good cheer ;
 Meat and drink within the house
 Eat they and drink they, and hold a *garottee*,
 (So the legend hath it). Unmannerly boys !
 In the presence of Death to make such a noise—
 Noise that noisier still doth grow,
 As faster the miser's wine doth flow ;
 With shout and jest and song they toast
 Old Overs with three times three ; and boast
 His virtues rare, his constant care
 To get work out of them, foul or fair.
 Louder and louder grows the revel,
 When, lo ! on a sudden each shrieks, 'The D-v-l !'
 See they a ghost or suchlike illusion ?

Who can describe that scene of confusion—
 Tankards tumbling,
 Feasters stumbling,
 Terror all in one mad mass jumbling.

There in a sheet old Overs stands,
 Holding a taper in his hands.
 Still had he laid till he could no more ;
 Now, in a rage, doth he ramp and roar,
 Rating them well, till one seizes an oar,
 With the butt-end whereof he strikes him so sore
 On the crown of his head, that, cover'd with gore,
 And as dead as a nail in his own oak door,
 Sinks Overs the ferryman on to the floor.

Citizens twelve, ere his corpse may rest,
 Sit on his body and hold a 'quest ;
 Citizens twelve in this verdict agree,
 'He caused his own death, therefore—*Felo de se.*'

O, fathers may be miserly,
 And cruel eke and stern ;

But daughters are a grateful folk,
And love them in return.

Right tender-hearted Mary was,
To pious customs used,
And much she sorrow'd that the corpse
Was burial refused.

With grief and terror half distraught
She hasten'd fearfully
Unto St. Saviour's holy shrine
In lonely Bermondsey.

The wooden ferry-house, which stood
Where now a modern block
Of warehouses on either hand
Hides ' Mary Overie's Dock,'*

She left; and down by silent Thames
She went with weary feet,
Through meadows, where now London Bridge
Stands hard by Tooley-street.

At length she reach'd the abbey fair,
Where pious monks did dwell;
To whom, with broken voice, the maid
Her bitter woes did tell.

And, as it chanced, that very morn
The Abbot, for to see
His abbey-lands, had gone unto
Old Charlton, Kent, S.E.†

Now men, albeit monks, who ne'er
A daughter's love have known,
Are made of softer stuff, 'twould seem,
Than iron, wood, or stone.

Wherefore, their Abbot being out,
They laid the corpse within
Their sacred ground, and sang a mass
For him who died in sin.

But, after seven days had gone,
The Abbot home did hie;
Who, meditating 'mong the tombs,
Did a new grave espy.

O, fiercely glow'd his righteous rage
When he the news did learn!
How did his zeal for holy things
His monks' weak folly spurn!

* North of the church, by the side of West-Kent Wharf, may still be seen a little creek bearing this name, to the west of which is an old gateway adjoining certain antiquated wooden buildings.

† 'The manor of Charlton, with its appurts, to the monastery of St. Saviour of Bermondsey, near Southwark' (Dugdale, *Mon.* vol. i. p. 640, Reg. Roff. p. 206).

He had them out, and round about
 The grave they stood ; while he,
 In tones that reach'd their inmost hearts,
 Discours'd full forcibly.

Nor yet alone his anger did
 Express itself in word ;
 At his command that miser's corpse
 Was straightway disinterr'd.

But, be it corpse of murderer
 Or wicked suicide,
 It certain is that, in *some* place,
 It must perforce abide.

Two by two, a goodly band,
 Round the grave abash'd they stand ;
 Reverend father cannot say
 Where old Overs at length may lay :
 There, by that grave, he cannot stay.
 All the brethren stare and gaze
 One at another, and then in amaze
 At the troublesome body ; while, over the wall
 Of unhewn stones, so rough and small,
 The Abbot's donkey, that in his paddock
 Has heard the noise of shovel and mattock,
 Stretches his neck, and catches the eye
 Of Turald, the lay-brother, standing by.
 Fond of a jest is Turald, we think.
 He looks at the ass, and both of them wink.
 ' Reverend father, I beg to suggest,
 As my humble opinion, that it would be best
 To fasten the corpse to the donkey ; the rest
 We might safely intrust to his well-known sagacity.'
 The Abbot, rebuking him for his loquacity,
 Takes his suggestion, and firmly insisteth
 That Dapple, the ass, shall go whither he listeth.

O gray, O gray is Dapple's coat
 And hazel is his eye ;
 With steadfast face and stately pace
 He goes through Bermondsey.

A purpose is a noble thing ;
 And Dapple's well-cut nose—
 So sternly set—a purpose firm,
 With lofty aims, now shows.

The marshy meads, the river wide,
 With solemn step and slow
 He passeth, down the Roman road
 Named Kent-street doth he go.

And there he cometh to a pond—
Call'd Thomas' Watering*
By pilgrims—into which he doth
His loathsome burden fling.

Now on the water's well-worn brink
A gibbet there doth stand;
A warning to wrong-doers, who
Do sore afflict the land.

It is beneath the fearsome tree
That bears the fruit of sin,
The Abbot's comely ass doth stoop
And slip old Overs in.

* * * * *

Mary's lover, so true and tender,
Pray, what assistance doth he render?
Mary's lover, so bold and free,
Where, O where, may he chance to be?
Youth, for ever at the side
Of the maiden you hope to make your bride
When all goes smoothly, what do you say?
'In all probability, out of the way.'
You've rightly guess'd. When this solemn event
Occurr'd, he was deep in the Hurst of Kent,
And long it was ere the news got down
By messenger, sent from London town;
But as soon as he heard it, he saddled his steed,
And was off and away at the top of his speed;
Thinking of Mary, with thoughts so tender,
And how he would be the stay and defender
Of her and her fortune, when, lo! his horse stumbled
O'er a hard clay rut, and the rider tumbled
On to the road; by one false step hurl'd
From his animal's back right out of the world.

Within the lonely ferry-house
Fair Mary weeps and prays;
And counts the hours one by one
Through dreary nights and days.

And there alone she makes her moan,
And for her love doth wait,
And chides the lengthy miles of land
That keep him from her gate.

And Thames may lap his sedgy banks,
And Thames may fall and rise;
But cold beneath the Kentish clods
Fair Mary's lover lies.

* Prior Linsted is not a very accurate archaeologist: St. Thomas of Canterbury lived and died *after* the Conquest. This, however, is a detail.

And after many days are gone
At length the news she hears :
Ah, who may heal her breaking heart ?
Ah, who may stay her tears !

'My love is gone ! my life is dead !'
She crieth day and night.
Her flaxen hair is streak'd with gray,
Her face is thin and white.

But when long months have pass'd away,
And all her tears are shed,
She saith, 'I'll serve the living ; thus
I best may mourn the dead.'

Wherefore she in her fair young hands
An oar takes, and the wherry
That once her father's was doth row
Each day across the ferry.

And with the miser's hoarded wealth,
And with her own hard gain,
A house for sisters doth she found,
And for long years maintain.

And Mary and her sisterhood
Do deeds of mercy show
Unto the sick and poor and all
Who suffer any woe.

And though, perchance, another age
May hardly deem her right ;
Yet works she out the best she knows,
According to her light.

And when doth end her useful life
And she doth go up higher,
Her body resteth in a tomb
In Mary Overie's choir.

And Fancy, on All-Hallow's-e'en,
From out the modern block
Of warehouses that strives to hide
St. Mary Overie's Dock,

May see her still the gateway pass,
And go into her wherry,
And oar in hand, with ne'er a sound,
Glide gently o'er the ferry.

L. ALLDRIDGE.



THE IVY-MAIDEN.

THE IVY-MAIDEN.

Your face, sweet Constance, and surroundings—
The ivy-wreath that rings you round—
Give full excuse for wild heart-boundings
And voice more tremulous in sound.
But Ivy's maidens 'weep and wring,'
And you love best to laugh and tease ;
Methinks some meaning marks the thing—
Ay, ivy means 'Intent to please.'

But, dearest, at this fatal juncture
I own as empty is my purse
As bladder suffering from a puncture ;
So, as for better or for worse
I can take no one—or, believe me,
I'd risk my chance of winning you—
Say, child, will you as friend receive me ?
Your garland speaks of Friendship true !

What ! tears in those blue eyes indignant,
And quivering in those laughing lips ?
Was then my proffer so malignant ?
Ah, well, the blind boy often trips !
Suppose this New Year saw a twining
Of bridal wreaths for you and me,
I think 'twould know of no repining :
Green ivy means 'Fidelity.'

O sweet New Year ! O sweet beginning
Of strange new life to either soul !
O sudden start, triumphant winning,
The start of life, and yet its goal !
Sweet Constance, with thine ivy-wreathing,
Be to thine own surroundings true ;
Nay, blush not at this whisper'd breathing
That ivy tells of Marriage too !

B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING.

THE DREAMLAND OF LOVE.

CHAPTER I.

LA PETITE.

THE old Château des Sapinières, in the pleasant province of Anjou, stands looking across its broad terrace and the garden which has replaced the old courtyard, down into a landscape with green trees, grass with sheep feeding, a flash of water beyond, and a distance full of lovely varied tints. It is a water-colour picture, waiting for an artist to carry it away; soft and clear, the light masses of foliage lying peacefully on the blue air that surrounds and peeps through and shadows them.

But Mdlle. de Saint-Hilaire was no artist at all, and she was not thinking of the view as she stood on the terrace that afternoon, gazing into the distance, with the silent old house behind her. It was early in September, and a great sun was baking down on the weather-beaten walls. All the pink-and-white sunblinds were down, shading the lower windows, and the white shutters were closed above. Now and then a sound of voices made its way from the salon to the girl's ears, as she stood by the balustrade of the terrace, quite out of hearing of any words—a solitary figure, with a short straight shadow on the gravel, in a little buff gown and a large shady hat. In a yard to the left of the house a carriage was drawn up near the coach-house, under the shade of a large chestnut-tree. The coachman on his box might have been asleep, he sat so still, and the horses stood

hanging their heads: they were old and fat, and glad of a rest in the middle of their journey. But a clock in the house struck four, and, as if a spell was broken, everything began to move. The horses woke up suddenly, came round at a slow trot, and stopped before the broad terrace steps; a poodle with long gray ears rushed out of the house and barked; Mdlle. de Saint-Hilaire started, turned round, and hurried in with quick graceful movements. After a few minutes two ladies appeared, still deep in talk, and advanced slowly across the terrace towards the carriage. They were both elderly women. The visitor was the younger of the two, short and plain-featured, but with something about her both pleasant and distinguished.

'Then I am not to see la petite to-day?' said she. 'Well, perhaps it is better that we should not meet again till things are decided. I leave the affair in your hands—it could not be better placed—and I shall anxiously expect an answer.'

'I think I can promise you a good one,' said Madame de Saint-Hilaire. She was a tall, thin, upright old woman, who carried a long stick, and wore a black straw hat on her thick gray hair. 'I have always found my granddaughter reasonable enough. She will feel as I do, that monsieur votre fils does her a very great honour.'

'Du tout, du tout. You are very amiable to say so,' said the younger lady. 'And when do

you expect your English relations?

'This afternoon. They will be here in an hour or two.'

'Indeed! I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing them. I have seen so little of the English—a very interesting nation. Are they handsome, these young people that are coming to you?'

'I really cannot tell you. I have not seen them since they were children.'

'Ah, par exemple! Adieu, madame—à revoir!'

The visitor got into her carriage, and the horses went trotting slowly off round the sweep and away through the trees in the direction of the high-road.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire went back into the house, followed by her poodle, and called 'Marie!' on which her granddaughter came stepping lightly down the wide oak stairs into the hall.

'Come out to the bench. The sun is not so hot now, and I want to speak to you.'

Some of the large trees that grew below the terrace were beginning to throw a kindly shade across the yellow gravel and the white bench under the house wall. Any one at the library window above could have heard all that was said here; but the old lady and her granddaughter lived alone at the château, and their servants were all safe at the other end of the house.

'I told you that I had exchanged letters with Mme. de Rochemar about you,' said the Comtesse, stroking her dog's curly head with her stick, and glancing at the girl beside her with a little anxiety.

'Yes, grandmother,' said Marie quietly.

She sat with her head and eyes drooped, smiling faintly; a slenderly made little person, with

delicate aquiline features and soft pensive dark eyes. She looked like the last of a long race of fine ladies and gentlemen, with the shadow of their sins, perhaps, on her devout Catholic conscience, and the brightness of their wit lingering about her finely-cut lips.

'She has a very high opinion of you,' Mme. de Saint-Hilaire went on. 'She proposes that you should be married to her eldest son. She assures me that it is also his wish, that he has the most agreeable recollection of you, and hopes earnestly for your consent. You have not forgotten him, I suppose?'

'I remember M. le Marquis very well,' said Marie. 'He gave me a very pretty bonbonnière. I have it still. But is he come back from Algeria?'

'No; but his mother expects him very soon. You are fortunate, my child, to meet with such a good parti. Mme. de Rochemar tells me that this has been her intention for years, and nothing but your bad health, mon amie, kept her from speaking to me sooner. One must be glad to be connected with such a family as hers. There are few that hold a better position. Their fortune is large, their châteaux are fine, they are loyal and religious, and there could not be a person of more excellent character than Louis de Rochemar. You accept his offer, then, mon enfant, with gratitude!'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire talked on with great satisfaction, but there was a shade of doubt too in her strong handsome face, and she still looked anxiously at the weak slight girl beside her. Perhaps she knew that Marie's chief weakness lay in her delicate looks. A girl with the blood of the old noblesse in her veins, and whose ancestors had died in the Revolution, was not likely to be without

strength of some kind—if it was only self-will.

'Mme. de Rochemar loves you, ma petite, as if you were her own daughter,' said the Comtesse.

'She is very good,' said Marie gently. 'Yes, if I must be married, grandmother, if you will not let me stay with you, M. de Rochemar pleases me as well as any one I have seen. If it *must* be,' she repeated, suddenly looking up into her grandmother's face.

'Yes, it must be,' said the old woman in answer. 'You are my only heir, and those other Saint-Hilaires shall never have my estates. Allons! the affair is settled. Embrasse-moi, Marie.'

The girl took up her grandmother's hand and touched it with her lips. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire laid her other hand on her shoulder, and kissed her affectionately on both cheeks.

'I shall have great pleasure in writing our answer to Mme. de Rochemar,' she said.

CHAPTER II.

AN ADVENTURE AT LE MANS.

WHILE the sun was shining down on Les Sapinières in its quiet cheerfulness, and while little Marie de Saint-Hilaire's thoughts were quite taken up with the prospect of being Marquise de Rochemar one of these days, her English connections were on their way from Paris, and, having a couple of hours to wait at Le Mans, had wandered off to look at the town and the cathedral. Notre Dame de la Couture attracted them first, with its two unfinished Norman towers, its great open west front, the graceful arcade above, and the noble stone carvings in the archway.

Frank Wyatt pulled out his sketch-book, and stayed in the

court leading up to the bare, strange, rather sad old church, while his brother and sister went in, walked up the nave and round the silent chancel, dived into the crypt, tried to study the history of that Jeanne whose tombstone is set against the wall there, poked and peered about in the darkness in true English fashion. They decided that after all there was not much to be seen, and hurried off to tell Frank so, and to drag him on to the cathedral. As they came out under that great open archway, leaving the dark shady church behind them, and advancing into the white sunshine that glowed on the paving-stones, they met two ladies face to face. Behind these ladies was the intense blue sky, hard, clear, like the background of an illumination. The younger lady's beautiful fair hair escaped in some curls under her hat; the light shone through them, and they glittered like an aureole as she walked into the church with free decided steps; a tall, upright, noble-looking girl, like an angel in some old Italian picture.

'Johnny, what a lovely girl!' said Miss Wyatt.

'Yes,' said Johnny rather absently. 'Her mother was very handsome too,' he went on after a moment.

'How do you know it was her mother?'

'By the likeness, of course. Look, there's Frank with a priest talking to him.'

When they reached their brother the priest had turned and walked off in another direction, his black skirts clinging to his legs.

'What is the use of staying here?' demanded Frank. 'That little abbé says the cathedral is magnificent. We must get on there at once. It is an immense distance.'

'Then you can't walk,' said his sister.

'Thank you, I can.'

The three marched off together through the narrow streets, passing all kinds of quaint shop-windows, at which the young men would stop and look in, though their wiser sister begged them to remember that time had a limit and trains would not wait; across baking little 'places,' paved with round stones, climbing up, up, higher and higher, with at last a glimpse of the cathedral to help them on. O, that last delicious bit of street!—beetling, dirty, picturesque; painted figures, carvings on the houses, doorways with the touch of grace and beauty that those old builders gave to everything; perfect old women screaming to each other from the doorsteps, equally appropriate children playing in the gutter. Frank Wyatt, standing still in the middle of this street, tried to say something on sanitary matters, but broke off to admire the nearest house-front. His sister, less theoretical and more practical, hurried up the street as fast as she could, exclaiming, 'How delightful, how quaint! Johnny, do come along; let us get out of this. We shall have no time for the cathedral.'

It was strange to see how all that dirt and squalor crept up to the very brow of the hill, crouched under the very eaves of the great cathedral, as it stood crowning the height, a dream in stone; its graceful flying buttresses cutting the sky, its windows and arches, roofs and gargoyles and pinnacles soaring very near heaven, breathing praise, gathering the prayers and sighs of its poor neighbours, and carrying them with its own rich offering into a purer air. These young English people, as they walked up the stately nave, were making a pilgrimage to the

grave of an English queen. Berengaria, Cœur de Lion's dear and beautiful wife, lies in the south transept of the cathedral. Standing by her effigy, one looks up the narrow side aisles of the choir; they are full of rosy light. There is silence in the church, except a distant footfall echoing on the stone. It is a fit and peaceful resting-place for the noble Plantagenet queen.

There were sure to be some lines, or arches, or effects of light and shade, that had to find their way into Frank's book. His sister, who was hot and tired, came and sat down on a straw chair beside him, looking over him, while their younger brother wandered away by himself. These three agreed very well in their journeys together. Frank settled their plans and directed everything; Agnes, who was the eldest and plainest of the three, carried out the plans and took all the trouble, except when Johnny woke to the necessity of helping her. She admired her brothers heartily, especially, of course, Frank; though I suspect that she loved Johnny the better of the two.

The time stole away in the solemn cathedral. Frank's clever pencil worked on; the pink light changed and faded a little. Very soon it was time to go back to the station, and the two walked out together to the porch; but no Johnny was to be seen. Frank sat down there, while Agnes hurried back into the church, calling him in a low voice, flying with quick steps up and down the aisles. As she approached the choir, and was stretching her neck anxiously to look for him, a priest, with a round good-natured face, came down and asked her if she had lost anything.

'I am looking for my brother, monsieur,' said Agnes.

'He is not here,' said the priest. 'I think he is gone out, madame. I saw him—a young English gentleman, with a blue coat and curly hair. You will find him no doubt in the street.'

'O, merci, monsieur !' said Agnes; and she went back to the porch, thinking that the fat young priest had described Johnny as if he liked him, and with even a little regret in his tone that no part of the same description could ever apply to himself.

They walked slowly down the nearer streets, looking about them, but Johnny was nowhere to be seen. Only the sunny pavement, which had been so quiet before, was now covered with groups of people, chattering and gesticulating. Shop-people had come to their doors, women were leaning out of the windows. At one place, near the deep cutting that was being made right into the centre of the hill, quite a little crowd was gathered; they were pointing and describing and exclaiming. Frank asked a woman who was passing what it was all about. She had just stopped to listen, and was nodding her white cap and staring with her big brown eyes.

'Ah, dame,' said she, 'a terrible accident;' and she went on with a quick confused history. The horses of Mme. la Marquise de Valmont had been frightened, had run away; 'le cocher de madame' had been thrown off the box; the horses, with the great carriage behind them, had rushed through the streets, and would have precipitated themselves into this cutting; but fortunately, at the last moment, somebody stopped them. They dragged him a few yards, but he kept his hold upon them; and as soon as they were stopped he disappeared. Mme. la Marquise was 'désolée;' for he

had saved the life of her and mademoiselle, and she wished to reward him, but he was gone.

'Le petit Pichard says it was no one of the town, but a saint out of a church-window,' said the good woman, showing her teeth. 'C'est possible. What do monsieur and madame think of it?'

'Is Madame la Marquise a good Catholic?' asked Frank gravely.

'Mais oui! No one could be better.'

'Then probably it was a saint. Bon jour, madame.'

'I wonder if those were the ladies we saw in the other church,' said Agnes.

They went on down the steep street, making inquiries here and there for their brother; but no one had seen him pass, and every one had been thrown into a state of distraction by Mme. de Valmont's wicked horses. The curly head and the blue jacket did not appear round any corner. Frank, however, declined to fuss himself or be anxious, and was quite sure that Johnny would turn up at the station before the train left.

'We have nothing to do but to take care of ourselves,' he said consolingly to Agnes. 'If a fellow who has been several times round the world can't get on alone for an hour in Le Mans, there's no more hope of him.'

They arrived at the station, and were penned up with their fellow-travellers in the waiting-room.

'But if he does not come,' said Agnes, looking despairingly at her elder brother, as he walked up and down in the middle of the room, the object of admiration to two young Frenchwomen in the corner, 'Frank, are we to go on without him?'

'Of course. Do you think we can frighten your Welsh great-

aunt out of her senses, and keep her carriage waiting at the station? He must get on as he can—stupid fool!

‘What can he be doing?’

‘Probably he has lost his way among some of those streets, and is somewhere about three miles off at this moment. At any rate he is too late, for here’s the train.’

The waiting-room doors were flung open, they walked out on the platform, and, after lingering till the last moment, got into the train; but no Johnny appeared. Frank had spoken to one of the officials, and left a message for him: there was nothing more to be done.

So it came to pass that as the sun was getting low that afternoon, and as the shade of the great chestnut- and walnut-trees was creeping higher and higher on the front of the old château, its inhabitants heard the far-off jingle of harness-bells on the road, coming over the hill into the village. Past the church with its white spire; over the bridge, where the slim poplar-stems lay reflected on the clear water; into the avenue; out again into the sunny meadow, where the shepherdess was collecting her flock to drive them homewards,—nearer still, past the little corner towers of the old courtyard, round the grass and the pink geraniums, came that merry and sweet jingle, till the good horses stopped in front of the steps, where the gray-haired valet-de-chambre was waiting, and the two English visitors got out at Les Sapinières. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire was standing with Marie on the terrace, and came forward to welcome her young relations. She kissed Agnes, and put out her left hand to Frank; then she introduced them to ‘my granddaughter, Mdlle. de Saint-Hilaire;’ and Marie made a deep graceful curtsy, her two

hands in long yellow gloves in front of her.

‘But there are only two of you,’ said the old lady. ‘Where is your brother John?’

‘Indeed I wish we could tell you,’ said Agnes, who was looking quite peaked and anxious; her pleasure was sadly spoilt by the Le Mans adventure.

Frank, who had very good manners, began to make his brother’s excuses, setting him down as an absent queer sort of fellow, who never did things quite like other people. He begged that Mme. de Saint-Hilaire would not disturb herself, or think about John at all.

‘But it is very unfortunate. We must not lose him altogether. Auguste,’ to her coachman, ‘you must go again to the station to meet the next train. M. Jean Wyatt has not arrived.’

‘Bien, madame la Comtesse.’

Johnny’s brother and sister both interfered eagerly. He would walk, he could find his way, he would be shocked at giving so much trouble.

‘The distance is nothing at all, and it will do my horses good,’ said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. ‘Come, let us go into the house. I am very happy indeed to see you, and to welcome you to Les Sapinières. I hope, my dear Frank, that you have recovered from your illness. You look tired; it is a hot day for travelling.’

Frank, hat in hand, answered these inquiries most politely. They all followed the Comtesse through the glass door into the hall, and turned into the great brown salon, where Marie pushed forward old tapestry chairs on the polished floor, and begged them to sit down. She herself sat down by Agnes, and asked little questions about her journey, thinking in her heart that this English cousin was rather dull.

'How was it you lost monsieur votre frère?' she asked, smiling. And Agnes told her all about it, still looking a little sad and distraite.

Johnny lost! It seemed like a horrible dream. Not to know where he was, when two or three hours ago he had been walking by her side in that funny narrow street, and under the glorious arches of the cathedral!

Little Marie was very kind and sympathising; threw up her hands and nodded her head while Agnes told her story.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, as she entertained Frank, glanced from one to the other, and came to her own conclusions. She had a very great fancy for good looks, and a young man with a face and figure like Frank's did not much need any further recommendation. The best type of Englishman, she decided; and who should know better what an Englishman ought to be? for her first cousin and great friend had married these young people's grandfather, one of the handsomest and most charming of men. This descendant of his was very like him: tall and upright, with a sort of easy grace about him; a regular handsome face, fair hair with a decided dash of yellow, clear quick blue eyes, and quite the air of what he was—a soldier and a gentleman. Frank had walked over the course, and won the old French lady's heart without any trouble or exertion. His sister was hardly so fortunate. Certainly she had a good figure, dressed well, and looked like a lady; but her face was plain, her complexion nothing particular, and she looked sad, puzzled, and downcast, and almost as if she wished herself somewhere else.

'Stupid!' thought Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'I thought they told me she was full of intelli-

gence. But perhaps the poor thing is anxious about her brother.'

CHAPTER III.

JOHNNY.

THEY were sitting on the terrace after dinner in a flood of moonlight. The old white stone balustrade, with the masses of ivy hanging over it, gleamed like marble. The moon looked down at them over the trees on the left; she and all the stars seemed to shine with an intense brightness unknown in more northern skies. The owls hooted in the still clear air, answering each other from tree to tree. Peloton took no notice of them at all, but sat wisely on his hind legs beside Mlle. Marie, who fed him with bits of sugar soaked in coffee, as a reward for the tricks he had been displaying for the strangers.

Old Jacques had brought out coffee on a little table under the library window; and there, where Marie had heard her fate that afternoon, she was sitting in the midst of the group, smiling and very cheerful, trying, as Frank and her grandmother did most of the talking, and all Agnes's senses were absorbed in listening for bells in the distance, to remember exactly what M. de Rochemar was like. Short, she was afraid, and altogether a very different-looking person from this tall Englishman; but, after all, what did that matter, and what business had she to be comparing the two? Somebody had told her once that people with titles and fine estates need never trouble themselves about the want of good looks, and of course that was true. Englishmen, she believed, were generally poor, and more or less

'bourgeois' in their extraction ; if that was the case, poor things, what good fortune for them to be handsome ! She glanced across at Frank, who happened just then to be looking at her. The moonlight gave a charming refinement to his handsome face, which was a little thinned and softened by recent illness. Marie returned to Peloton with affection, taking his curly head between her hands, and gazing into his good brown eyes. 'Peloton, tu es mort !' said she then, trying weakly to make him resume his tricks ; but the sensible dog knew she did not mean it, and took no notice whatever.

'Are your brothers like each other, Agnes?' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'No, matante, not at all. Johnny is not so tall as Frank, and a good deal darker. I don't think any one would ever know they were brothers. But I heard you saying that Frank was like a soldier, and I am sure you will think Johnny like a sailor. Ah, don't I hear the carriage coming ?'

'What quick ears you have ! Yes ; but it is not nearly at the church yet. Now suppose he does not come.'

'We must go back to Le Mans to-morrow, and look for him,' said Agnes.

She got up and walked to the top of the steps, standing there to listen. Marie and Peloton followed her, and the poodle plunged down the steps, and rushed barking into the bushes, in pursuit of some imaginary trespasser. The bells came presently jingling up. Jacques appeared from the house, the horses stopped, stout good-humoured Auguste looked down smiling from his box.

'Ah ! C'est ça—le voici !' said old Jacques, as he opened the carriage-door.

Johnny jumped out, quite awake, and hurried up the steps.

'Here you are !' said Agnes, seizing his arm to make quite sure of his reality.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire came forward to meet him. She could not be anything but kind and hospitable, and she accepted the young man's earnest apologies with a smile. Not that Johnny said much, but what he did say he evidently meant ; and I think Mme. de Saint-Hilaire understood this, though he did not make half so many excuses for himself as his brother had made for him.

'I beg your pardon. It was extremely kind of you to send for me. I'm so sorry you did. I managed to miss the train, you see.'

'Don't speak of it. It does not matter in the least,' said the Comtesse kindly. 'We were a little anxious about you, that was the worst of it ; and I am afraid you have distressed yourself a great deal with very little cause.'

'But how on earth did you manage to do it, Johnny?' said Frank.

'O, I lost my way ;' and Johnny turned round to make a low bow to Marie.

'Let me present you to my granddaughter,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'Johnny !' said Agnes, coming up behind him. 'My dear, what have you done to your coat ?'

'My coat ?'

'It is torn half across the shoulders. Have you been fighting ?'

Everybody laughed, gently and politely, for Johnny began to laugh himself.

'O, an accident. I'll tell you about it some day.'

'Now you must come in and have some dinner ; and in the

mean while you can tell us your adventures,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

Johnny began protesting, like a sailor or a schoolboy, that he did not want any dinner; but she took him into the house, and presently left him with his sister and Jacques to take care of him in the *salle-à-manger*.

The old servant went in and out. Agnes sat with her elbows on the table, and gazed smilingly at her brother.

'I am uncommonly hungry, though,' he said. 'What a jolly room this is!'

It was picturesque, with its brown painted walls and shiny floor, and long curtains of rich mixed colours at the two windows. A shaded lamp was hanging over a round table heaped with fruit and flowers. Old Jacques brought in dish after dish, and handed them to the young traveller, who did justice to everything.

'Johnny, now do tell me what happened to you, and how you managed to tear yourself like that,' said Agnes imploringly.

'It's a long story. I don't know where to begin.'

'At the beginning, of course. What did you do when you went out of the cathedral?'

'Walked down the street. Do you remember seeing some photographs in a shop-window? There was one of that old church we went into first.'

'Yes. What has that to do with you?'

'Well, I thought I'd go and get it. I can't sit for hours in a church, like you and Frank. I suppose I dawdled about rather. At any rate I never got as far as that shop—not then, at least, for I went afterwards. Here it is.'

He pulled out a photograph of the west front of the old

church, and threw it to his sister.

'That's Nature, you see. I call that better than Frank's pencil-scratches, don't you?'

'Well, as to that—it is a very good one. Go on. What did you do?'

'As I went down the street,' said Johnny slowly and quietly, going on with his dinner, 'I met a carriage and horses coming up at full gallop. Two ladies inside, and nobody on the box, and some people running behind. I thought I might as well stop the horses, so I ran and got hold of them. They were difficult to stop just at first; and I suppose in hanging on my jacket got torn.'

'That was you,' said Agnes, under her breath, half laughing, and yet with her eyes full of tears.

'It was awkward for the ladies,' Johnny went on. 'They sat like two Britons, without saying a word. Who do you think they were?'

'Those two we saw going into the church?'

'Yes. That was clever of you. Did you see them afterwards?'

'No; but we heard of the accident as we came down from the cathedral. Nobody seemed able to imagine who stopped the horses, unless it was one of the saints out of the church-windows. We heard that the ladies were dreadfully vexed at not being able to thank him. What became of you, Johnny?'

'I cut away as soon as I possibly could, down one of the streets, and managed to lose myself somehow. Did you happen to hear their names?'

'Madame and Mademoiselle de Valmont.'

'Well, whatever their name was, they behaved grandly.'

Johnny seemed quite happy and satisfied in his admiration of

the two brave Frenchwomen, and his sister knew better than to say anything more about his part in the business. They went back together into the salon, where they found the others. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire was sitting in a large chair near the piano, and Frank and Marie were turning over a heap of music. Just as Agnes and Johnny came in, Marie took her place on the music-stool, and began playing a polka. Her small fingers jumped in a funny staccato style from one end of the keys to the other. Frank stood and watched her, his tall figure reflected in several mirrors; Agnes took a chair close by; and Johnny sat down by the round table in the middle of the room, and began turning over an illustrated paper that was lying there, not at all conscious that Mme. de Saint-Hilaire was inspecting him, as the lamplight fell on his face.

Decidedly plain, she thought; and yet there was a certain picturesqueness. A squarish face, with short and by no means handsome features; a skin burnt by all possible weathers to a dark reddish-brown, a tinge of brickdust red on his moustache and the ends of his hair; broad shoulders; a figure awkwardly strong and square, and not tall enough, though by no means to be called short. Then came the redeeming features of this rough exterior. Large gentle gray eyes, with long lashes curling like a girl's—beautiful eyes, if they had not been too sleepy and indifferent; and a quantity of soft waving brown hair, with a red light on it, as if it had been just caught by the sun. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire saw all this as she looked at Johnny, and a little modified her first estimate of him as an ugly, awkward, boorish young man. Still, of course, no one

could help feeling his vast inferiority to his brother. Here was Frank, with a charming smile, taking Marie's place at the piano, and singing with a very fine accent, for an Englishman, the 'Valse des Adieux.'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire turned round in her chair to give her whole attention, and listened with a great deal of pleasure and approval.

Marie, sitting by Agnes, exclaimed, 'Charmant—charmant!' half under her breath, and gently clapped her hands.

CHAPTER IV.

ON MARRIAGES.

MADAME DE SAINT-HILAIRE'S château lay on the eastern slope of one of the pretty valleys of Anjou. From the road that passed through the village, on the other side of the river, you saw its square solid towers, with their steep gray roofs standing up among surrounding trees. Green meadows, full of wild flowers, went sloping down to the stream. Along its banks, and all about the lower ground, there were rows and plantations of poplar, Swiss, black, and white, their tall slim stems and light silvery foliage brightening up the green all round as they stood against the background of the larger and darker trees. There were plenty of these too—oaks, elms, chestnuts, walnuts, and the graceful-leaved acacia, and the alanthus with its bunches of red keys.

On the other side of the château were several large old yards, with long ranges of white buildings, and great square gateways connecting them. Here there was always something going on, for the Comtesse farmed her own estate, and employed a great many people.

Behind the house was the old 'allée de plaisance,' where apple- and walnut-trees grew in great numbers; but the grass was rough, and the old pleasure-ground was chiefly used now as an approach to the walled fruit-garden at the further end. Up on the slopes beyond were the 'sapinières' themselves, the fir and pine woods, covering many acres; below them, and round behind the farmyard, lay the vineyards, sloping to the south and south-west.

It was altogether a picturesque old place, with the remains of former strength to be found everywhere—in fragments of wall, foundations of towers, all gone now except the two corner tourelles with round pointed roofs, thick walls, and gun-holes, between which you now drove up to the front of the house.

Agnes opened her window wide that morning, and looked out into the summer brightness and peacefulness. The flowers were all shining in the sun, that came to them over the farm-buildings and the acacia branches; a dog was barking somewhere; a woman in a round white cap and a short blue jacket and petticoat, with a long stick in her hand, came driving some cows across from the yard to the lower meadows. One of them tried to run up among some trees by the side of the road; she shouted out an inquiry why it always persisted in going where it ought not; the creature was ashamed of itself, and hurried back to its companions. Then Mme. de Saint-Hilaire appeared on the terrace, and Agnes took her hat and went down-stairs to join her. Her aunt, as she called her, received her very kindly.

'You can come with me to my garden,' she said; 'I am going to gather fruit.'

So Agnes took a large basket

out of her hand, and they went off together through sunshine and shade along the wild allée to the garden at its further end.

As they went Mme. de Saint-Hilaire asked Agnes a great many questions about her home and her family. She considered herself quite perfect in her knowledge of English life, having once spent two months with her cousin, soon after she married these young people's grandfather.

'She was married in the year '19,' said she, 'and I was with her in '24, when your father was a child of four years old. We were very gay; we went to many parties, danced at balls, enjoyed ourselves. English life has many pleasures for young girls; I had a great fancy for it then. I thought there was no marriage like an English marriage. I can well remember all I felt on that subject.'

'My grandmother's was an English marriage, was it not?' said Agnes.

'Yes, indeed. She met your grandfather in Paris in those happy days when we had a king. They met at a ball; and I may tell you, my dear, as you are English, and accustomed to such things, that they loved each other at first sight. M. Wyatt contrived to inform Mdlle. de Magny of his devotion. She, in answer, begged him to address himself to her parents; which he did, and after a little delay they consented. He was only just in time, for they were on the point of arranging a marriage for her with M. Paul de Jolivet. But they were affectionate parents, and not unwilling that she should be happy in her own way. I was much attached to your great-grandfather, my uncle De Magny; but I must confess to you that I had a prejudice against M. Wyatt. I had no sisters, and Léontine, my dearest

friend, was taken away from me to another country. I liked him afterwards, however, and visited them with great pleasure not long before my own marriage. I saw them again, with your father and mother and yourselves, when you were all staying at Boulogne.'

'Yes,' said Agnes, 'I have always so much wished to see more of you.'

'You are very amiable, my dear child. It is a great happiness to me to have you all here. And now tell me about your very charming elder brother. Has he quite recovered from his illness?'

'He is not really strong yet,' said Agnes. 'It was rheumatic fever, you know. But the doctor said that such a change as this would be of the greatest use to him. He had a year's leave, and he has got six months' extension because of his illness, so I hope he will get thoroughly well. He is a very nice invalid, for he can always amuse himself; he is so clever in all sorts of ways. I don't think I could mention anything he cannot do.'

'You are very proud of him, no doubt,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'And your brother John, he is not quite so remarkable?'

'I am not sure,' said Agnes thoughtfully.

The old lady glanced at her, with a slightly incredulous smile.

'Here we are at the garden,' she said. 'Open the gate, if you please. Now you shall cut what fruit I tell you, for I am not young enough to stoop much. The peaches are this way.'

There was a fountain in the middle of the garden, and round it grew great beds of zinnias, scarlet, purple, crimson, orange, with their silky leaves and gold centre crowns turned up to the sun. The apple- and pear-trees in the garden were loaded with fruit; there were

tall castor-oil plants growing, and a tobacco plant or two, and several other strange things unfamiliar to English eyes. The white trellised walls all round were covered with fruit: peaches, red and golden; great heavy bunches of purple and white grapes, on which happy insects were already beginning to feast themselves; bright nectarines; figs, hidden among their leaves. Agnes and her aunt went round the walls. The Comtesse pointed with her long stick, and Agnes gathered obediently into her basket, and grew so lively and enthusiastic among the wonderful fruit that madame was quite pleased with her, and thought that after all she had a bright face, and her hair was a pretty colour and beautifully dressed. Somehow they did not go on with the subject of Johnny, for Agnes was not quite at home with this old French relation of hers, and felt inclined to let her take all the lead in the conversation. But when, the basket having become tolerably heavy, and a bunch of zinnias having been laid on the vine-leaves above the fruit, they were slowly making their way back to the house, Mme. de Saint-Hilaire went back to the subject of marriages, in which she naturally supposed that a young Anglaise must be interested.

'My friends will not believe me,' she said, 'when I assure them that the English never marry except for love. It astonishes them wonderfully.'

'But is it so, do you think, ma tante?' said Agnes doubtfully.

'Mais certainement! When such a thing happens in France, which of course it does now and then, we call it a *mariage Anglais*. There are merits no doubt in both. We must follow the fashion of our country. In a French marriage

all is carefully arranged; and if the demoiselle herself has not so much voice in it, everything is done for her by those who know her and love her best. Now in England, where a young girl settles these things for herself, how many mistakes are made!

'Perhaps so. But there is much more happiness.'

'That depends upon what we call happiness. Now my little Marie, I have not a doubt that she will be happy, for it has been my object to make her so. I have made a marriage for her with the eldest son of my friend the Marquis de Rochemar.'

'Indeed!' said Agnes, much astonished, for it had never occurred to her that the odd little demoiselle with her pale curious face could possibly be engaged to be married. 'And does she like him? Is she happy?'

'She does not know much about that yet,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, smiling. 'It was only arranged yesterday, and she has not seen M. de Rochemar for some years. But she must like him. He is very amiable and very sensible. I have the highest opinion of him.'

'You let me say what I please, my dear aunt, and you understand that I take an English view,' said Agnes bravely. 'I must confess that such an engagement, if it were to the greatest hero on earth, would make me very miserable.'

'It is possible. But, my dear, you must also forgive me for saying that you Englishwomen have not well-regulated minds. It is not your fault, but that of your bringing up. You have not our strong sense of duty. With us a Christian woman loves her husband as a matter of course because he is her husband—loves her children because they are her

children, and does her duty to all. Some malheureuses, of course, go astray, allow their minds to wander to other objects. That, however, is no one's fault but their own.'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire laid this down with some decision.

'On the contrary,' thought Agnes, 'it is the fault of those who marry them to the wrong person;' but they were reaching the house, and as Marie was just engaged she considered that argument would be useless. So she held her peace.

Breakfast was at eleven o'clock. The polished walnut table reflected the fruits and flowers, which seemed to be piled upon it as if there was no room for them all. The shutters of the front window were closed, and into the half-darkened room the inhabitants came one by one, in different stages of liveliness. Frank looked pale, and confessed that he was tired. Johnny let out quietly that he had been all round the place, and had caught some fish in the little river. Mdlle. Marie seemed to her English cousin, who had just heard such interesting news about her, to look rather wistful and indifferent, even perhaps a little cross. Her dark hair grew low on her sensitive white forehead, which she wrinkled up in a distressed sort of way. Old Jacques's ways seemed to fidget her; she would eat hardly any breakfast, and sat looking small and pensive in her buff-cambric gown. Her grandmother did not notice this at all, and entertained her guests with a healthy cheerfulness which one sees almost oftener in the old than in the young. At seventy, Mme. de Saint-Hilaire had more spirits and more strength than Marie at twenty-four.

Poor Marie! Agnes Wyatt, who was very romantic, quite put

herself into those little high-heeled shoes, and was filled with immense pity and sympathy at the thought of how she should feel in such a state of things. She supposed her mind was ill-regulated, as the Comtesse, with something less than French politeness, had told her. But however that might be, she was certainly old enough to have a mind of her own of some sort, and opinions of her own, though in some people's eyes they might be wrong ones, and she was pretty sure that her mother in England would agree with her in thinking this a dreadful thing. 'I am sure she is unhappy,' she thought. 'She looks quite pale and sad. How can I save her?' The answer to this question did not at once arrive.

In the mean time Marie was almost cross to old Jacques, who, after handing her several dishes in vain, half appealed to his mistress: '*Mademoiselle ne mange rien.*'

'*Merci! Non, vous dis-je!*' said the young lady, as she impatiently waved away the approaching *perdreux*, which seemed inclined to persevere. '*Non, grand'mère, je n'en veux pas,*' she said, with a faint smile across the table.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire did not attempt much remonstrance, and afterwards told Agnes that Marie had been in bad health for years, and that it was a wonder to see her eat anything at all, especially at breakfast.

As they stood in the great darkened salon, where long lines of light streamed through the nearly closed shutters across the floor, throwing rays into the mirrors, and catching the old china and the quaint carving of the chairs, the Comtesse called Frank, and asked if he was inclined for a drive that afternoon, to see some of her neighbours. 'I can take you all

four,' she said, 'if your brother will sit on the box with the coachman.'

Frank thanked her very much, but thought he had better keep quiet to-day. It was a great disappointment to him, but he had been foolish in dragging up the hill at Le Mans the day before.

'Agnes should have kept you in better order,' said the old lady. 'Do as you think best for yourself. Agnes, Marie, Jean, will you be ready at three o'clock?'

Marie followed her grandmother out of the room; Johnny, who had already made friends with the cook, went off to talk to her about his fish; and Agnes went up to her elder brother, who had thrown himself into a chair.

'Did you hear how Johnny tore his jacket?' she said.

'Not a word.'

'I wonder we did not guess it at the time. That boy is always doing brave things, and getting no credit for them,' and she told Johnny's story, at which Frank smiled.

'Of course, just like him. A great piece of luck for Mme. Whoever she was that he happened to be there. However, I think the sooner he gives up stopping other people's runaway horses, the better for him. One of these days he will get something worse than a torn jacket.'

'He wouldn't be Johnny if he did not do those things.'

'Wouldn't he?' said Frank.

'I have something else to tell you, Frank,' said his sister.

But just then Marie de Saint-Hilaire came back into the room, and the news of her sad fate had to be kept and brooded over for the present in the sympathising soul of Agnes.

CHAPTER V.

CHATEAU LAURON.

THEY drove in an open carriage along a magnificent road, wide, smooth, and perfectly firm, not a loose stone to be seen on its fine brown surface. It ran like a line of light between thick dark woods, in the deeper part of which Mme. de Saint-Hilaire told them that there were wolves and wild boars and deer of different kinds. Johnny wondered if he should come in for any hunting; but she said it was very unlikely at this time of year, though one of the gentlemen in the province had the right to kill wild beasts all the year round, being in special charge of them, with the title of 'Lieutenant Louvetier.'

Beyond the woods there came a hill, and a great wide view with more woods in the distance, with two or three church spires and villages, and here and there the towers of a château standing up clear and bright among green fields and vineyards. In that transparent air they could see a long way, to blue hills in the far distance; and all the nearer touches of colour—trees, flowers, cottage roofs, yellow pumpkins, grapes already purple—stood out in the sunlit landscape as if it had been a great pre-Raphaelite picture. Now and then they passed people on the road, walking, or driving the long carts of the country, sometimes drawn by strong oxen with bent heads and a yoke across their horns. The people looked up and nodded a friendly 'bon jour,' and Johnny, seeing that it was expected of him, pulled off his hat diligently to everybody they passed.

'What nice-looking people you have about here!' said Agnes.

'They are not nearly so handsome as in some parts of France,'

said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire; 'but they are very good people. Of course we have some bad republican characters, but they are not worth thinking of. They are black sheep, not at all respectable, and nobody takes any notice of them. Do you see all this wide plain? It was formerly a great forest, and was destroyed in the wars with the English. That old stone cross in the middle of the vineyard yonder marks the site of a battle.'

'This has not been a peaceful country,' said Agnes.

'No, indeed. And even now no one ever knows when the Red Republicans may rise, and bring another deluge of misery over our poor country. I could almost say that they would be worse than the Germans.'

Agnes was beginning to ask some question about the war, but Marie, who had recovered her temper by this time, leaned forward and seized her with both hands.

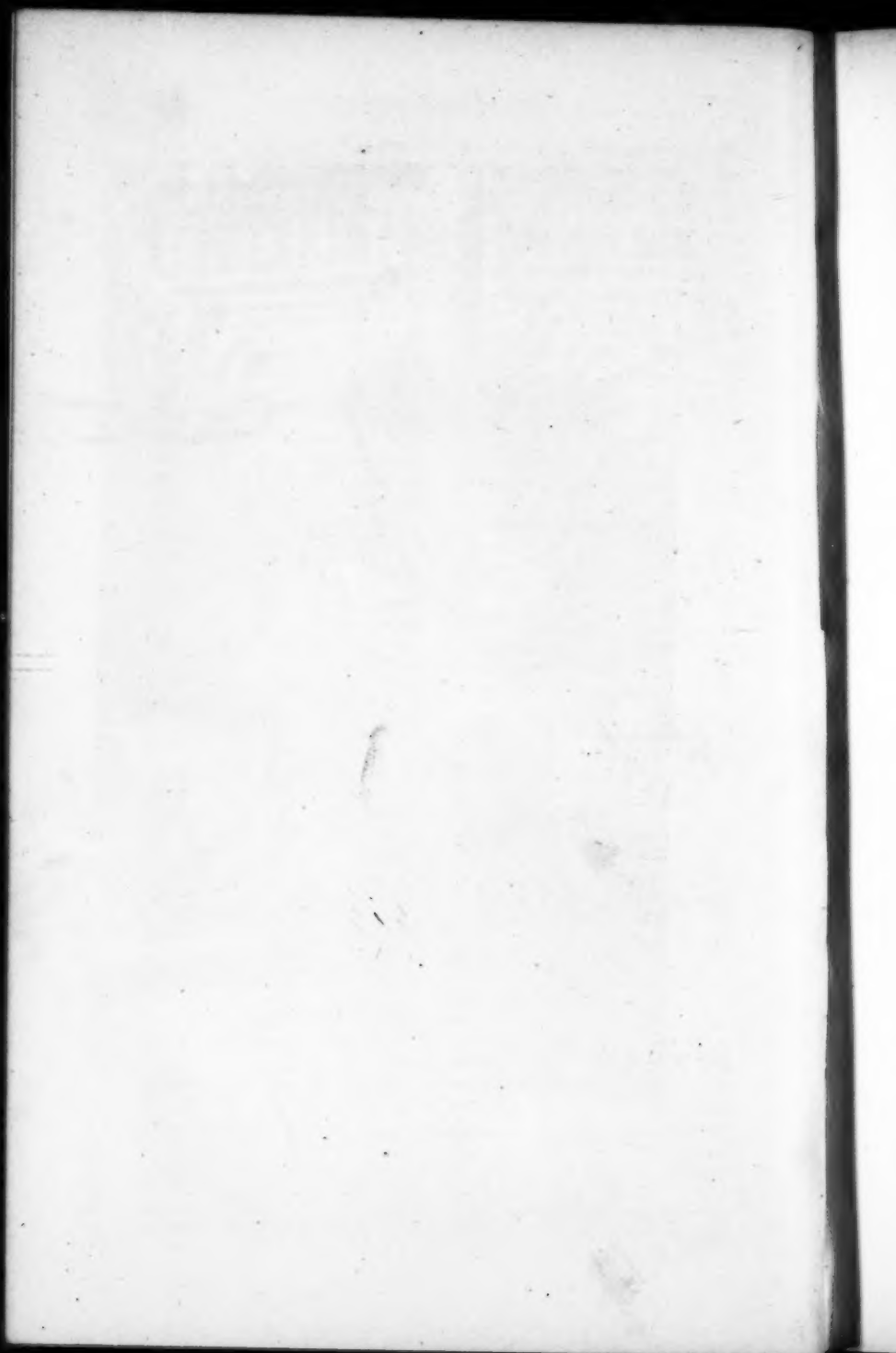
'You must not talk about the war,' she said. 'It was like an awful dream. It makes my grandmother ill to remind her of it. Some time, when she is not with us, you may ask me questions, and I will tell you about it.'

'Thank you,' said Agnes.

Past the great bare hill and the plain they came into a quieter, more homelike country; passed through a little quaint village, then between gardens and meadows where cows were feeding by the side of a stream. The meadows had no gates, and women and children sat watching the cows as they grazed. Sometimes dogs, with rough bristly hair, rushed out and barked fiercely at the carriage. Then the road went winding along a shady green valley with wooded slopes, the same little stream running, and poplar and chestnut-



'The girl took up her grandmother's hand and touched it with her lips.'—p. 52.



trees growing on the banks. Beyond that there was a poplar avenue by the water-side, such an avenue as one sees in a dream. The trees stood close together in an unbroken row along each side of the road, which was narrow here, though still smooth and good. The gray stems and the delicate foliage went up, up, tapering straight and slender to the sky, so tall that their tops as you looked up seemed close together, with only the narrowest line of blue between; the carriage and horses were like small things creeping on the ground as they went under them.

'This is something like a cathedral,' said Johnny, as he sat and looked back along the receding avenue. 'It gives one an idea of one's real size.'

'Yes, it is beautiful,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'It is on my friend M. de Valmont's property. He is very proud of it, and wishes it was nearer to his house.'

A flash of life and interest sprang into Johnny's eyes. He glanced at Agnes, who began to regret that she had not made an opportunity to tell their aunt about his adventure yesterday. She did not dare do it now in his presence, and thought that, as things had gone so far, it would be fun to wait and see if the rescued ladies told the story themselves, and if they would recognise Johnny as their rescuer.

For the last two or three miles the country was wilder again, the fields were steep and rocky, here and there rough little commons covered with bracken and gorse stretched away from the road, and heather just beginning to fade from its purple richness lay like a sunset cloud on the sides of the hills. Then they saw a great dark wood in front of them, and standing up before it, with arched

avenues leading to it and green lawns about it, was an immense building with towers and soaring roofs and many windows, like a castle in a fairy-tale, high exalted and gazing alone over the vassal country that lay humbly sloping up to its feet.

'There is Château Lauron,' said Marie, leaning forward.

'It is magnificent,' said Agnes. 'What an immense house!'

Johnny said nothing, but looked silently at those great towers.

'You do not often see anything so fine as that in England,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'What do you think of it, Monsieur Johnny?'

She was a little provoked by his quiet way of taking things, and put it down to that thoroughly English frame of mind which, feeling the value of its own opinion, won't rashly give it in favour of any new thing, however beautiful.

'It is a very fine old place,' said Johnny. 'No, I never saw anything quite like it before.'

They drove up the avenue, and round the wild open lawns, unenclosed, and looking as if the wolves from the woods would come down when they pleased and prowl about the house-door. There were no flowers, except a few blossoming shrubs that clustered under the great rugged walls, and under the double flight of steps that went up in a curve to the door. There were three square high-roofed towers, and corps de logis between them and extending beyond them in a long uneven line.

The whole family belonging to this stately old place was standing on the steps as Mme. de Saint-Hilaire and her party drove up: M. and Mme. de Valmont, their daughter, and two sons in shooting-coats. The gentlemen came with their hats in their hands to

open the carriage-door and help the ladies out. Johnny Wyatt, who had jumped out first, also stood hatless, and gravely returned such bows as were directed to him. Seeing M. de Valmont bend over the Comtesse's hand, and raise it gently to his lips, he was not sure whether he ought to observe the same ceremony with Mme. de Valmont, but she put him at his ease with a smiling bow. She was a very handsome woman, tall and fair, and though she had no longer the delicate lines of youth, there was something very attractive in her frank kindly expression. Of course it was the same lady who had walked with her daughter yesterday into the old church at Le Mans. This daughter, now standing behind her, had a much graver look on her noble young face. Her complexion was pale and clear; and there was a simple straightforward dignity about her twenty years which gave every one who saw her the feeling of being in the presence of a high-born maiden of the olden time. The English sailor, waiting in the background at the foot of the steps, looked up at her, and she looked down at him in her quiet way. Then she opened her brown eyes with a sudden surprise, and put her hand on her mother's arm, as she was just turning round to mount the steps with Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'Mon Dieu, maman, c'est lui !'

'What do you say, Cécile? Where? Who?' exclaimed Mme. de Valmont. 'Ah! c'est bien lui! Pardon, chère madame; it was monsieur votre neveu who saved our lives yesterday. Monsieur, how can we show you our gratitude?'

Everybody turned round, Agnes biting her lips and smiling with irrepressible delight, Marie and her grandmother utterly mystified.

'It was a noble action,' said

M. de Valmont, who was a slight, dark, pleasant-looking man, with very demonstrative manners; and going up first to Johnny, he took him by both hands and squeezed them affectionately.

Johnny was half afraid of being embraced; but M. de Valmont knew better than that. 'Max, Pierre,' he cried, 'where are you? Shake hands with this noble Englishman, and offer him your thanks for saving the lives of your mother and sister. Thanks are less than nothing. We owe him our whole happiness, all that makes life worth living. Ah, it is a debt that can never be paid.'

Under this shower of gratitude poor Johnny behaved beautifully. He smiled and said nothing, his sunburnt skin taking a still darker tint as he shook hands with the gentlemen. When Mme. de Valmont came and offered him her hand, with very sincere tears in her eyes and all kinds of pretty speeches chasing each other from her quick expressive lips, he just stooped and kissed the soft white fingers, still without saying a word. But when Cécile, with the wonderful life and light in her eyes, that very few even of those who knew her were privileged to see often, held out her slim young hand too, looked at him, and gravely smiled, Johnny pressed the hand in English fashion, and said in a low voice, looking at her,

'Merci, mademoiselle.'

'De grâce, ma chère,' began Mme. de Saint-Hilaire to Mme. de Valmont, as they went into the house, 'explain all these wonders to us. Marie and I are dying with curiosity. Where and when did you make acquaintance with my nephew John, and how had he the good fortune to save your lives?'

'I was going to tell you the whole story,' said Mme. de Val-

mont, 'and how grieved we were to have lost sight of our deliverer. But is it possible that you do not know it already? Your nephew has not told you of his brave action?'

'Neither my nephew nor my niece has said a word to me on the subject. I hear now for the first time that your life and Cécile's have been in danger,' answered the Comtesse, slightly aggrieved. 'When did this happen?'

'Yesterday, at Le Mans. I have not yet recovered from the shock. Would you not have thought that after such a drive as that the horses would have been quiet? But no! Had it not been for the heroism of your nephew, we should all have been dashed to the bottom of the new cutting.'

'Agnes, my dear child, why did you not tell me?' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'Ma tante, we were not with Johnny at the time. It was after we lost him. I should have told you, but I knew he would not like it to be talked of. And till we were driving along to-day I did not know that Mme. de Valmont was a friend of yours.'

'You are very happy to have such a brother,' said Mme. de Valmont—'as modest as he is brave. Does he follow any profession, this hero of ours?'

'He is in the English navy, madame.'

'And has French blood in his veins,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, as she climbed the stone steps in the hall.

Johnny had another ovation when they had crossed the pretty parqueted hall above, with its low arched roof, and gone on through the library into the great salon with its immense chimneypiece and painted ceiling, its tapestried walls and dark oak furniture. Here they all sat down in a circle of large fauteuils, and listened to

Mme. de Valmont as she thrillingly described her adventure of yesterday. There was much throwing up of hands, and many exclamations; more showers of grateful admiration on the head of the unfortunate hero. Mdle. Cécile said nothing, like a correct young lady as she was, but sat with a smile in her eyes and a lurking look of fun which sympathised with Johnny's discomfort under this mountain of thanks. Marie de Saint-Hilaire asked a few questions, smiled kindly at Johnny, and made complimentary remarks to Agnes. M. de Valmont, who had been in the French navy in his youth, began asking the young man something about his life on board ship. The two 'jeunes gens' listened and held their peace. After some time spent in this way, M. de Valmont asked Johnny if he would like to see his horses, a proposal which Johnny jumped at; and this ended in all the young people going out with him at the other side of the château, where the drawbridge crossed an old moat thirty feet deep, with trees growing in it.

'Now that they are gone, ma chère, I have something to tell you,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, moving a little nearer to the Marquise.

'Some news about la petite?'

'Yes. The affair with M. de Rochemar is arranged. I cannot tell you,' said the old lady, clasping her hands, 'what a relief this is to me. I have been very anxious about Marie, for, as you know, she has never been quite like other young girls—always difficult to manage, though the most charming child possible.'

Mme. de Valmont nodded and acquiesced, and then listened with great interest to the history of Marie's affairs. In her heart, perhaps, she did not quite regard her

as the most charming child possible, but she was far too good a friend and too polite a woman not to take her quite contentedly at her grandmother's valuation. Any faults that long acquaintance had spied in little Marie were quietly buried in the Marquise's own knowledge. She offered many congratulations, and spoke with the greatest kindness both of the girl and her fiancé.

'The Marquis de Rochemar is so good, so amiable,' she said. 'I only hope that Cécile may be as fortunate as her friend.'

'Have you any plans for her?' asked Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'She has had several offers, you know,' said Mme. de Valmont, shrugging her shoulders and flourishing her fingers in the air. 'Mais je ne sais pas—I tell them all that Cécile is too young; and as you know, one only daughter is different from a dozen. There is no hurry, and her father and I will give her to no one till we are perfectly satisfied. She has a right to expect as good an establishment as any young girl in France. And besides, her education is hardly finished. I cannot part with my Cécile yet. The other day I had a letter from my aunt d'Altain, proposing a gentleman of her acquaintance, Monsieur, Jules de Marillac. She says he is a fine young man, and heir to his old uncle, M. le Comte de Marillac. That sounds well, and I think it is just possible that if I see him in Paris, and if I like him, I may permit him and Cécile to have an entrevue. But I am not at all sure. Now that we are alone, I seriously must congratulate you on your charming nephew, to whom we owe so much. I admire mademoiselle your niece too; elle a l'air très-distingué. But as to him—such fearless courage, such presence of mind, such devotion!

You are happy in having such a relation, dear madame.'

'I am extremely glad that John behaved so well,' said the Comtesse; 'in fact, I am astonished. If it had been his brother I should have felt no surprise whatever. Frank is the flower of the family; and so you will confess when I have the pleasure of presenting him to you.'

'Is it possible?'

'It is so, I assure you. As handsome as an angel; clever, accomplished, with manners that might have been learnt at court. I am proud of him as my relation indeed.'

'And why did you not bring him with you?'

'He has long been suffering from a severe illness, and was tired after his journey. The next time we meet I hope he will be quite himself.'

'You and all your young people must dine with us very soon,' said Mme. de Valmont.

While these ladies were talking them over in the salon, the young people were following M. de Valmont all about the place. His stables were well worth seeing, to begin with. He had beautiful English horses, and they lived in stalls with brass headings and pink-marble mangers. The saddle-room, where the harness and the whips were so various and in such perfect order as to be quite an exhibition, had a polished floor, with little green mats laid upon it here and there. The young De Valmonts were very anxious to know whether such arrangements as these were commonly seen in England; and Agnes and Johnny assured them that such perfection was very seldom reached, or even tried for.

'Mon père est grand amateur de chevaux,' said Max de Valmont, a good-natured good-looking young man of two-and-twenty.

They went next to see some

deer-hounds, which had a house in the outbuildings; and then wandered round the courtyards of the old château. The present house was, perhaps, not much older than François I.; but there had been a strong castle here for hundreds of years before that. Six round towers defended the old enclosure, inside which there were now three or four large yards and a good-sized kitchen-garden. There were ivy and climbing roses on the battered old walls, and great walnut-trees leaning over them. Agnes was very much interested, and pleased M. de Valmont by asking all kinds of intelligent questions about the fortifications and the history of the château. Cécile talked to Marie, and helped her over the heaps of stones and the uneven places which were in their way now and then. The young men and Johnny lingered a little behind, but had not very much to say to each other; however, there were two fox-terriers to be played with, which came racing after them.

'Now follow me,' said M. de Valmont, as they crossed the kitchen-garden, 'and I will show you one of the causes of the Revolution. Take care, mademoiselle, the descent is very steep.'

They all followed one another down something which had once been a staircase, and now was a chaos of stones, and tumbling earth, and dead leaves, with long grass and weeds hanging over it. At the foot of this they mounted a broken step into a little doorway, and stood inside a round tower very oddly constructed. There were openings at the top, under the penthouse roof, and to the height of at least five-and-twenty feet there were tiers on tiers of pigeon-holes in the old white wall—thousands of them. In the middle of the tower there

was a great upright beam, with arms stretched out, to which were fastened two ladders. The arms turned round, and by their means the ladders could move from nest to nest.

'This is a funny place!' said Johnny.

'C'est le colombier,' said Cécile de Valmont, turning to him with a smile. 'One of the old rights of the noblesse. My father keeps it as a curiosity.'

The Marquis, in the foreground, was explaining to Agnes that before the Revolution the nobles alone had the right to keep pigeons, which lived in this tower, and flew out all over the country for their food, taking the best grain of the peasants, who had no business to complain if all the food belonging to them and their children went for the use of the seigneur.

'How wicked that was!' said Agnes earnestly.

'Oui, mademoiselle,' said M. de Valmont, smiling. 'That and other wickednesses were swept away so roughly that one almost forgets still to be indignant. My grandfather and grandmother, and many other of our relations, paid dearly for their colombier with their heads.'

'Ah,' said Agnes, shivering a little, 'I think I never realised the Revolution before.'

They climbed silently back out of the old tower, and were soon laughing in the garden sunshine, but Agnes's thoughts still lingered in the darkness of the Revolution. In more ways than one she could understand it now. In Mme. de Valmont, with her sweet easy manners; in Cécile, with her grave nobleness brightened by girlish fun, and the straight fearless look of her brown eyes; even in Marie de Saint-Hilaire, with her small frame and delicate features, and

air at once spirited, careless, gentle, and a little sad, she seemed to see the ladies who had kept up their traditions in all the terror of the prison, who had smiled and laughed sweetly, and prayed earnestly, who had not dreamed such a thing as cowardice possible, and

had gone on to their terrible death as if it was indeed the gate at the end of the 'thorny path that leads to glory.' Agnes was quite right: the times are not so changed but that it still means a good deal to have noble French blood in one's veins.

(*To be continued.*)

AN OLD FOGGY ON CHRISTMAS.

'Tis Christmas; but changed are the fashions
 Since I first heard its clamorous bells:
 For the girls of the period have passions,
 And the boys of the period are swells;
 Yet a charm on one's memory dwells.
 Long ago there were terrible spectres,
 And marvellous riddles to guess,
 In days ere the railway directors
 Put on the express.

'Neath mistletoe, loved by the Druid,
 You might then snatch a frolicsome kiss;
 And the punch of that time was a fluid
 That nobody voted amiss;
 And the snap-dragon—didn't it hiss?
 Every girl in your heart was a lodger
 Who met you with mischievous glance;
 And, O, what a romp was Sir Roger
 De Coverley's dance!

Mid beauties so buxom and lissom
 One forgot that the winter was cold;
 But why does it seem that I miss 'em?
 Perchance I'm a foggy grown old,
 Whose life is a tale that is told.
 When a man is approaching to fifty
 He seldom breaks into his nights,
 And is apt to be studiously thrifty
 Of violent delights.

But wherefore one's age be revealing?
 Leave that to the Registry books.
 A man is as old as he's feeling;
 A woman as old as she looks.
 Don't eagles live longer than rooks?
 Besides, in this festival season
 'Tis fit that great truths should be told:
 'Whom the gods love, die young'—for this reason
 They cannot grow old.

MORTIMER COLLINS.

DRAWING-ROOM AMUSEMENTS.

IF ever there was a country which stood in need of indoor amusements, that country is undoubtedly our own, whose climate—to put it in the prettiest way possible—is at best unreliable, and in which consequently the amusements most in favour in sunnier climes can have no sufficient place. What can be more delightful than Longfellow's Arcadian picture?—

'Pleasant it was, when the woods were

^{green}
And the winds were soft and low,
To sit amid some silvan scene,
Where, the long drooping boughs between,
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen
Alternate come and go.'

But unfortunately the times when all these charming circumstances combine to make life pleasant in England are few and so far between. The barometer and the thermometer have an ugly knack in this island of ours of dropping unconscionably and unexpectedly as soon as ever any scheme has been adopted which is dependent on the weather; and although some adventurous spirits do undertake those ghastly exposures of the skeleton of society called picnics, their immediate result is generally failure, and their final consequences gruel and mustard-and-water. But if the outdoor life of England is wanting in the elements of enjoyment of the gentler sort, the charms of its indoor life more than make up for it. In this at least we stand unrivalled. What can approach the comfort, the cosiness, and the inexpressible sense of home-affection which steals over all when, with the family circle complete, the curtains are

closed, the lamps lit, and the fire is blazing clear and bright, giving notice of the hard frost prevalent outside?

Yet for winter evenings something more is required than reading and conversation. Conversation, which, when properly understood, is the best of all ways for passing time, demands qualities which are but too rare, and which, even if they exist in the highest degree, find but little scope for their display in intimate circles of which the members know each other too well to have many points of novelty to exchange such as conversation requires. The most popular and sufficient means of spending the evening hours pleasantly has ever been found in amusements harmless and perhaps trivial in themselves, but demanding from those who join in them precisely that good-nature, forbearance, and familiarity which form the charm of intimate circles, and offering at the same time sufficient elements of interest to be attractive to such as are willing to show a readiness to be amused. The following pages will have performed a task by no means useless if they furnish the means of passing pleasantly some few evening hours, and of thus indirectly strengthening the power of home ties and home affections. In the first part will be found the more ambitious kind of amusements, such as demand a certain amount of preparation or a considerable share of special aptitude; while the second part embraces such as require no preparation at all, and are fitted for the use of all

circles in which a moderate degree of intimacy prevails.

The simplest games have been chosen in preference to those of a too complicated nature, and many will be found here which have for the first time, it is believed, been drawn from the private stores of country-houses in England and from some of the châteaux in France. It is necessary to say that in all amusements of this sort everything depends on the spirit in which they are undertaken; and thus it will often happen that a game or an entertainment depending on mutual coöperation which to one party will appear intensely amusing will to another seem unutterably stupid; whence the general rule may be derived that it is worse than useless to attempt anything of the sort unless those who take part in it are fairly in accord with and sympathetic to each other, and at peace with themselves and the world in general.

PART I.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

THEATRICAL representations no doubt take the very first place among drawing-room amusements, and the great and increasing popularity which they enjoy is a proof how much they are appreciated as a means of filling up hours which else would be passed more idly and not more profitably. There is indeed scarcely a country-house in the kingdom which has not been the scene of an attempt at this kind of thing; and as it is an invariable rule for amateur theatricals to be a brilliant success, they are still on the increase both among those who have already tried them, and among those who desire to begin. Nevertheless it has been sometimes found

that, through the neglect of certain precautions, the play has proved a source of greater pleasure to the actors than to the spectators; and it will therefore be useful to give a little wholesome advice, derived from actual experience, to those who would undertake theatricals with a desire to do justice to themselves and to their friends. The first necessity is to appoint a good manager, and to invest him with the most despotic authority over the rest of the *corps dramatique*, and, indeed, over the resources of the house generally. He should be empowered to choose the piece, to settle the 'cast,' or, in other words, to decide who shall act each character, to arrange the stage business, and to superintend the erection of the stage itself and the choice of the dresses; and his decision should be final and entirely without appeal on all matters connected with the business in hand. In return for all his trouble he will probably (for such is human nature) expect to play the best part in the piece; but if he is the best manager he will in all likelihood be also the best actor of the party, and there will therefore be no question as to that part of the matter. In order to secure for all these important duties a proper person, it may perhaps be necessary to invite to the house the most supremely disagreeable person with whom the hostess is acquainted; but that is an incident, and will not, of course, be allowed to weigh against the success of the theatricals, which will be found to depend entirely upon the tact and capacity of the guiding spirit. It is not to be supposed either that the manager will lie on a bed of roses. The first thing will be to select the piece or pieces—a question which will necessarily be decided by the strength and capabilities

of the company. In this probably everybody will claim a voice ; and it will be no easy task to reconcile the claims of the thousand conflicting propositions which will be made. Tragedies of course will be avoided, because as professional actors cannot play them, it is hardly to be expected that amateurs can. Farces, although in much favour, require generally very excellent acting, must 'go smoothly' if they are to produce their effect, and are seldom so successful as they are expected to be. They have, too, the disadvantage of having usually been seen by most of the audience with good professional actors playing in them, and comparisons are consequently apt to be made which will not be to the credit of the amateurs. Probably the best kind of play is a short comediotta of a period which affords the opportunity of wearing gorgeous dresses, since the presentation of a good figure in maroon-coloured velvet and buff boots, or a pretty face under a Marie Stuart cap, will often prevent attention from being too critically fixed upon the acting. Then will come the casting of the parts; and here the difficulties will be found to increase, for it will then be discovered that some who have hitherto been ardent in the scheme are either too timid or too indolent to undertake the parts the manager would give to them, while others will be found to raise claims for which it is impossible to discover the slightest foundation; and the manager will probably find that he must give the lovely and gushing heroine over to a middle-aged young lady who likes the idea of being proposed to on the stage because she has never experienced it in real life ; that the hero is pretty distinctly claimed as a condition of coöperation by a young man, more distinguished by family

than by talent, but whom it is an object to oblige ; that he himself must play the heavy father, who has to be brutal and a butt all through the piece, and is only reduced to reason at the fall of the curtain by a concourse of fortuitous circumstances ; and that there are two servants, or two noblemen, or two robbers, who never can be played at all for want of people to take them, unless he can induce two good-natured friends to come down and sacrifice themselves for the occasion. But we will suppose all this over, and will assume that the piece is selected, and the parts cast. The point the manager must then insist upon is that every one of the actors shall learn his or her part so as to be 'word-perfect' two or three days at least before the piece is played, and, if possible, before the first rehearsal takes place. This is the most essential part of the whole thing, for it were as useless to attempt to make bricks without straw, or to build a house without bricks, as to play a piece without a perfect knowledge of the words. No half-knowledge will do, and none of those fallacious promises to 'know it on the night' must be received ; but every one must be perfect, and that at as early a period of the undertaking as possible, for without it the stage business cannot be properly arranged or the actors adequately drilled. It is very important, too, to have as large a number of rehearsals as possible, as upon this will depend the degree in which both words and business are fixed upon the minds of the actors. Two or even three rehearsals a week should be called, if, as is usually the case, the time for preparation is limited. During the time that all this is being done the dresses will have to be chosen and tried on (assuming them to be hired of a costumier, which is the best way), the stage contrived and

arranged, and the programmes printed or written out. A stage sufficient for ordinary purposes may be formed by using the folding doors of a drawing-room as a proscenium, or it can be arranged at a very small expense by simply placing two upright pieces of timber against the side walls of the room with a slight beam across resting upon them. On this latter must be tacked the curtain, which can be made to loop up from each side, or to draw up from the bottom by four or five cords running through rings. In front of the curtain on the floor, must be placed the footlights, which can be made by simply boring a sufficient number of round holes (in which the candles are put) in a strip of deal, to the outer edge of which a piece of tin must be nailed to serve as a reflector and to keep the light from the eyes of the audience. In front of the footlights, inside the curtain, a wire should be stretched some eighteen inches from the ground to guard against the possibility of the ladies' dresses taking fire. If scenery is required it can be hired with the dresses, or may be painted at a small cost on canvas stretched on wooden frames. Not the least important part of the proceedings is the choice of a prompter, who should have a thorough knowledge of the piece, and should be instructed not to keep his eyes fixed solely on his book, but to watch chiefly the actors, that he may know when to give the word wanted, and may not proffer it as an unpractised hand invariably does, to the ruin of all the good 'points,' at every interval of silence, many of which will be intentionally left for effect. When all this is done, and 'the night' arrives, the acting becomes the principal consideration; and here a few recommendations may be useful. The actors should, above all, re-

member not to hurry themselves either in their words or their gestures, so that they will be heard by all the audience. In order to effect this it is not necessary to shout, or even to speak very loud. The principal thing to be remembered is to pronounce each word distinctly, articulating every syllable. Care in making up is very necessary too; and while for ordinary characters a black line under the lower eyelash and a little rouge gently shaded off from the cheek-bones to the ears will be sufficient, the old men must be 'lined' with pale Indian ink or brown paint over the wrinkles made on the forehead and at the corners of the eyes by screwing the face up into various positions, while the comic characters must be treated, according to circumstances, with appropriate wigs and a liberal use of colours. The paints used should be vegetable colours, these being less injurious to the skin than those made of minerals. A little cold cream will be found useful in removing the paint from the faces of those who possess an over-irritable skin. Beyond this it is useless to say anything, for no amount of advice will make actors of those who may not happen to possess the talent for the dramatic art. If, however, a fair amount of such be present, the play will not fail to be a success, so far, at any rate, as those interested in it will be able to ascertain; and even if the audience should flag a little, the actors will have already derived sufficient amusement from the rehearsals amply to repay them for the trouble they have taken; while the remembrance of it will add a peculiar zest to the pleasure which they will hereafter derive from meeting each other.

CHARADES.

Charades are of a less ambi-

tious character and consequently more easy of execution than theatricals proper, and the great charm of them is that they can be, as they should be, devised, executed, and forgotten in half an hour. The first step is a little private consultation among the actors. A word of two or more syllables must be chosen capable of being broken up into shorter words, such, for instance, as 'Inspector;' and a separate plot must be devised to represent each of the words of which it is composed, as well as the whole word itself. As the dialogue should be impromptu it is necessary that the characters should be very strongly marked. The dresses and wigs can be contrived out of anything that can be laid hold of at the moment, to which end it is necessary that all the available stores of the house should be placed at the disposition of the actors. The usual rule is to make the plots distinct from each other; but it will be found to add materially to the interest of the charade if they are connected with each other, so as to form as it were only separate acts of the same play. Thus the word 'Inspector' is divisible into 'Inn,' and 'Spectre,' the first of which may be adequately illustrated in this way: A lady and her daughter arrive at the Golden Lion, an hotel in the country. The mother is an extravagantly sentimental character and a poetess, and has torn her daughter, who is quietly practical, away from the London season, partly in order to nip in the bud an affection she has displayed for a young banker, and partly in order to 'commune with Nature.' Of course the young banker arrives in disguise (either an artist, a shipwrecked mariner, or a noble beggar defrauded of his paternal

estates will do), and he takes rooms in the inn, and arranges with the daughter a plan of operations with the object of bringing matters to a successful matrimony. A landlord can here be introduced, whose chief feature will be rotundity of form and indignation at his hotel being called an inn, as well as a 'boots,' mindful of tips and curious after stray silver in the pockets of the coats he has to brush. The second word can be illustrated by the interior of the Golden Lion at midnight, the mother being discovered reading 'The Raven,' with interlineations and criticisms of her own, with the daughter yawning by her side. The latter asks to be told of the Castle of Otranto and its apparitions, a desire which the mother is only too delighted to indulge, and is in the act of describing the bleeding nun when the clock strikes twelve; a clanking of chains is heard, and the banker appears clad in a sheet to represent a spectre, whom the mother interrogates, and learns that she must cross her daughter's will no more. She cannot agree to this, however, quite readily, so the ghost tells her of a manuscript hidden in an old chest in the garret. She rushes out to find it, when the banker throws off his disguise and proceeds incontinently to elope with his lady-love.

The third act will represent 'Inspector.' The mother will be found reading a bundle of hotel-bills, which she supposes must be the manuscript in question, and occasionally bewailing the absence of her daughter, when the host announces that news has been received of her. The banker again comes in, this time disguised as an inspector of police; tells a long tale of his having rescued the daughter from the

power of fourteen banditti (the real fact being, as he tells the audience aside, that he could not find a post-chaise to elope with), and finally brings her in, and has her hand given to him as a reward for his valour. The moral of course is that mammas should not be too romantic nor daughters too matter-of-fact, and any disposition to doubt that such a conclusion can be fairly deduced from the plot must be promptly suppressed. Any number of charades can be contrived in this sort of way, but it is essential that in this kind of performance the actors should take care not to speak all at once, and when they do speak not to go on too long at a time. There is not so much difficulty in finding words as in finding ideas with which to illustrate them; but here are a few which may be useful if none occur: Mantelpiece (mantle-peace), Brandy (Brand-eye), Portrait (Port-rate), Madrigal (Mad-rye-gal), Horticulture (Haughty-culture), Buskin (Bus-kin), Patriot (Pat-riot), Penelope (Pen-elope).

In addition to those already described, dumb charades may be played; but since, as their name indicates, the actors are restricted to pantomime for the expression of the word or syllable, the difficulty of the matter is much increased. Dumb charades, indeed, should only be undertaken by those who have remarkable facial power and a knowledge of expressive gesture which it is difficult to acquire in English life. If well done, however, they are extremely amusing; but the words chosen must be capable of full and easy pantomimic representation. 'Outrage,' for instance, may be illustrated by the difficulties of a gentleman afflicted with bills. The first syllable may be expressed by the different attempts made to

find him at home by different creditors, each one of whom, on failing to find the debtor, indicates his determination to pursue a different course, such as shooting him, summoning him to the county-court, appealing to the Lord Chancellor, writing to his father, or taking up a position on the doorstep till he returns home. The second syllable may portray the rage of the papa, who, having arrived in town and succeeded after much difficulty in obtaining admittance to his son's rooms, finds them full, not as he expected of legal books and many briefs, but of piles of unpaid bills and a number of dogs, foils, and boxing-gloves. He expresses his determination to cut his son off with a shilling, and on the arrival of the young man with a cigar does so with much energy and determination. The whole word will then be illustrated by the admission of the creditors, who have all called again in a body, and who, finding nobody but the old gentleman in the room, insist on believing that it is the young man himself in disguise, and proceed to carry into effect upon him all their threats. After he has been shot at, stripped of his coat, made to read a threatening letter addressed to himself, committed by the Lord Chancellor for contempt of court, and otherwise maltreated, the son appears with a brief, and on expressing contrition and throwing his dogs, boxing-gloves, and cigars out of the window, is forgiven and the debts paid, to the satisfaction of everybody and the full elucidation of the word.

The names of 'Historical,' 'Poetical,' or 'Shakespearian' are sometimes given to charades, but as they merely indicate the nature of the word to be illustrated, they need no further explanation.

For those who wish to play French charades here are some words. Fougneux (Fou-gneux), Détresse (Dé-tresse), Cor-teau (Cor-teau), Cordon (Cor-don), La-mentable (L'amant-table).

PROVERBS.

These are of the same nature as charades, except that instead of a word a proverb is represented, and the plot must consequently be calculated to show the truth of the saw chosen. It is usually, however, necessary to tell the proverb at the end, and for this, as well as for other reasons, they are not so amusing as charades. The construction of a plot to illustrate a moral is necessarily more difficult than the construction of one to illustrate a word. Nevertheless, if carefully arranged they are capable of being made interesting. Here are some: 'Don't halloo before you're out of the wood,' 'Necessity is the mother of invention,' 'Handsome is as handsome does,' 'Faint heart never won fair lady,' 'More haste, less speed,' 'Love me little, love me long,' 'The pitcher goes often to the well, and is broken at last,' &c.

Perverted proverbs may also be played, the object of the play being, as the name indicates, to justify a total departure from the saws usually received. Thus, 'Punctuality gathers no moss,' 'A rolling stone is the soul of business,' 'A burnt cat is the thief of time,' 'Smooth words dread the fire,' and 'It's an ill wind that butters no parsneps,' are all capable of being justified by an equal amount of ingenuity with that which is required to illustrate the original proverbs. As no intelligible plan of life or code of morality is capable of being derived from the old sayings, which have generally little beyond their epigrammatic character to recommend

them, Sancho Panza himself could not object to the attempt to improve them by running them one into the other, and the wisdom and virtue of the world will certainly not suffer any loss from it.

TABLEAUX VIVANTS.

These are perhaps the very best of the more ambitious drawing-room amusements, since they combine the largest amount of preparation with the least amount of actual exertion and smallest tax upon capacity for their representation. To be able to look well and to stand still are the only qualities required, and there is consequently less fear of breaking down, and therefore less anxiety connected with them, than in those amusements already noticed. To make up for it, however, they require, if anything, better management than either theatricals or charades. Everything, in fact, depends upon the manager's capacity. It is indispensable that he should be thoroughly acquainted with the requirements of the case. He must, above all, have an artistic eye, for in tableaux the rule is, 'Always judge by appearances,' and he should be invested with as much authority as in the case of theatricals. The course of proceeding is first to choose the subject of the tableau, and this will be found no easy matter, for the manager will discover that most of those who have not sufficient confidence to act have more than sufficient confidence to stand and be looked at in tableaux; and it will be found that the ladies are particularly desirous to appear in quaint and magnificent dresses. The effect of this is that he will have to range through history and ransack his memory of foreign galleries and exhibitions of painting for subjects in which the fair and the unfair sex are present respec-

tively in the proportion of about seven to one. He will grow desperate over the private history of the great Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots, and will be generous indeed if he does not invent some new scandal as to the latter. He will vacillate between the Four Seasons, Cleopatra, and Faith, Hope, and Charity; and if, when he has finally been reduced to the murder of Rizzio, Joan of Arc, and Sir Walter Raleigh's cloak, he should be told that they have been 'done before,' he must be in a position to assert with some show of truth that at least they were never so well done as he means to do them. Having then settled the subject, the dresses and wigs must be provided (and here again the professional costumer must probably be invoked), and the stage arranged—a very important matter. It is most desirable that for tableaux the stage should be raised, and at some distance from the spectators—two conditions which add greatly to the effect of the pictures. Blue or white gauze should be stretched over the whole of the proscenium before the curtain, and the background formed of green baize, or, if dark colours preponderate in the dresses, of warm gray drapery. The lights, too, are very important. They must be fitted with reflectors (carriage-lamps are useful for this reason), and be disposed according to the sort of light required at the sides of the stage, facing of course inwards. The lights among the audience should at the moment of showing the tableaux be either quite extinguished or turned down as low as possible. Like all other such things the tableaux must be rehearsed. It is of course necessary too that at the rehearsals all the costumes should be worn, since, as the excellence of the tableaux depends not less

upon the grouping than upon the arrangement of the colours, a rehearsal without dress would be no rehearsal at all. This necessity for dressing, however, adds to the fun of the thing, and the charm of coming down to breakfast on a cold winter's morning in the costume of Sir Walter Raleigh (which consists principally of pink-silk tights) will be appreciated by those who, like myself, have experienced it. The actors will be found to look somewhat ghastly by the pitiless daylight, and even Amy Robsart and Mary Queen of Scots will probably, if it be possible, improve on appearing on the stage, which must be shut off from the daylight and lit up as it will be at night. Then begins the important work of the manager. He must of course be able thoroughly to realise the 'situation' represented in the picture chosen, and to give to each person in it an exact idea of the passion or sentiment to be portrayed. Unless, indeed, a manager can be found capable of doing this it is useless to attempt tableaux. He will impress upon each of the actors the necessity of throwing his or herself into the thing thoroughly, and of actually feeling for the moment that which it is intended to depict. Unless this is remembered Rizzio may be found blandly simpering with the dagger at his throat, while Darnley's guilty conscience may be overcome by mirth at the sight of Ruthven being tickled by a rebellious feather of one of the maids of honour. It will be best to show a tableau twice, or if it will bear it three times, as the difficulty of remaining in the same position without unsteadiness is too great to allow of each exhibition being sufficiently prolonged to satisfy an average audience of friends. Soft music appropriate to

the scene represented should be played immediately before and during the display of each tableau, which will be found to add materially to the effect. For choice of subjects a reference to a portfolio of engravings, or an appeal to the picture-gallery reminiscences of the company at large, must be relied upon. 'Judith with the head of Holofernes' is good, the head being represented by that of one of the gentlemen, whitened, dashed with blood, and with the eyes closed, which he will put through a hole made in the salver for the purpose, his body being concealed by drapery. 'The Maid of Saragossa' is effective too, especially if a field-piece can be borrowed from any neighbouring garrison. Millais' picture of 'The Huguenot,' the 'Poisoning of Fair Rosamonde' (Percy Reliques); a scene from the 'Rape of the Lock,' taken at the moment when the fatal curl is falling a victim to the scissors; the trial of Constance de Beverley at the Convent of Lindisfarn (vide 'Marmion'), are all effective, the latter especially so if a lady can be found willing to follow the verse which tells us that

'Her sex a page's dress belied ;

a condition which will be compensated by the opportunity for display afforded when, as we learn,

'A monk undid the silken band
That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her head,
And down her slender form they spread
In ringlets rich and rare.'

BOUITS RIMÉS.

This amusement requires a considerable amount of ability to be well done, and if it is not well done had best be left alone, so that the seeker for pastimes must be sure of his company before he introduces it. The name sufficiently indicates the nature of the

task to be performed. One of the party chooses two, three, or four pairs of words which rhyme to each other—such, for instance, as mile and tile, strand and land, love and dove, friend and end—and gives them to each of the rest to make a verse. The fun of the thing consists in the different modes of treatment which are employed by each person. Take the above words, for instance, arranged alternately; here is a specimen of what may be done with them impromptu :

'For many a weary, waking, toilsome
mile,
I wander wretched by the sea-girt
strand ;
For Celia, cruel as she's versatile,
Sends me to rove unheeded through
the land,
Love's but my scorn, but ever scorns my
love,
And vows she can but bear me as a
friend ;
Thus, like a poor unhappy turtle-dove,
I coo myself to death, and there's an
end.'

Another version :

'How doth the little camomile
Grow upward in the strand,
And spread its roots from tile to tile,
O'ershadowing the land !
Poor Sarah Gamp, when sick with love,
Hails it her dearest friend ;
For like to Bet—that simple dove—
Tea is its proper end.'

Here, again, is a different treatment :

'Dragging for a mile
On the burning strand,
Destitute of tile
In a roasting land,
The crocodile in love
Woos his scaly friend,
And, unlike the dove,
Eats her to an end.'

The above specimens may be considered feeble. So they are, and so will be most of those which are brought forth under this system. The greater the absurdity the greater the success, and that is the only criterion with which I am acquainted. It will be seen that this amusement tends to encourage mediocrity into making an effort.

TWELFTH-NIGHT AND SNAP-DRAGON.

A TWELFTH-NIGHT Party! And have met a joyous youthful crew,
Sweet opening buds as ever yet from parent-flower grew;
And merry prate and laughter shrill with music fill the air,
For Grace and Youth and Innocence and honest Mirth are there.

Ha, Snap-dragon! Turn down the lights! Papa, come forth, and be
The wizard weird to fire the flame of fearful mystery—
The pale-blue flame that flickers up, and on our faces gleams,
Mid smother'd laughter from the boys, from girls pretended screams.

With shouts of mirth and merriment the game goes gaily on,
And crows and chuckles baby Tom—the rogue!—high-perch'd upon
His granddad's shoulder, whilst the flame leaps blue and weird and
bright,
And peals of laughter greet the feats of each adventurous wight.

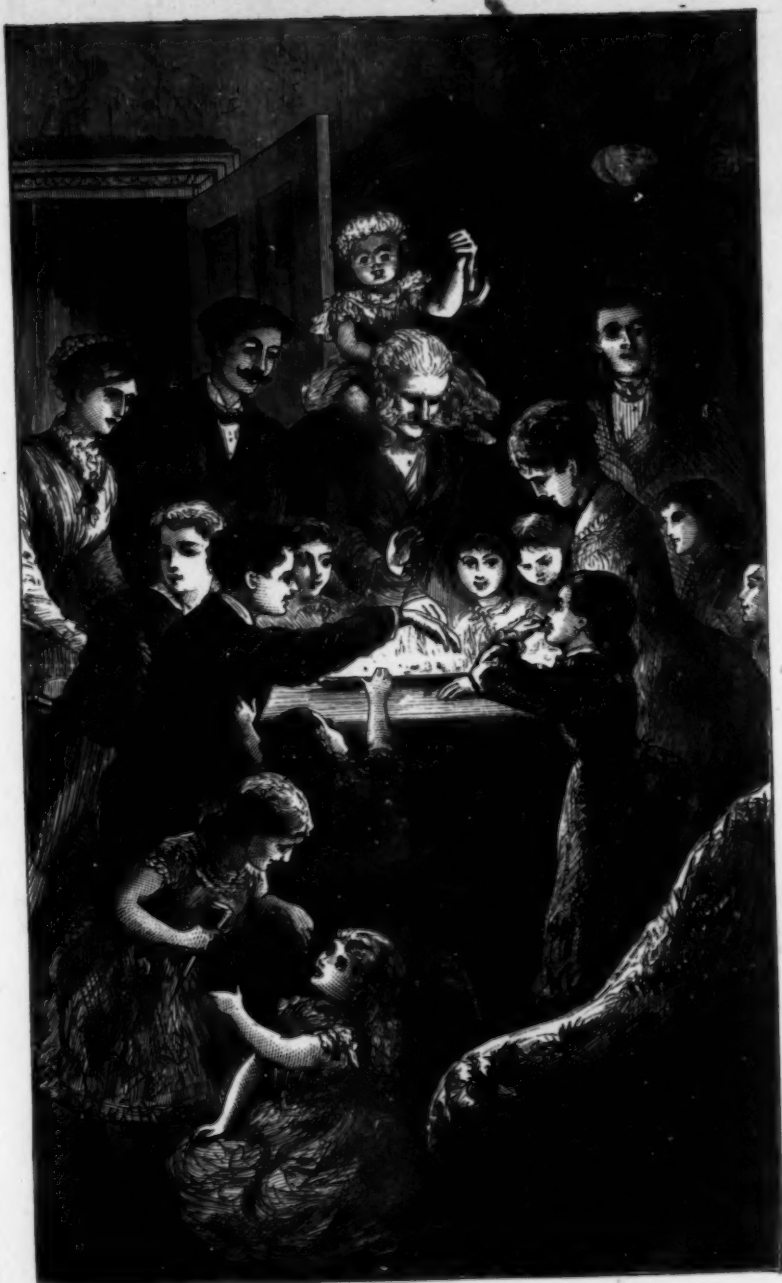
And lovingly behind the group the smiling elders stand,
And note each sparkling mirthful eye, each outstretch'd eager hand;
The boy's quick dash—for it becomes his 'manhood' to be bold—
The shy girl's timid venturing, are charming to behold.

Till, tired of laughing, from the game the youngsters one by one
Fall out. And now mamma suggests—to keep alive the fun—
'The Characters!' Ah, happy thought! All-joyous now the scene;
For what to youth would Twelfth-night be without a King and Queen?

With glee the 'Characters' are drawn; the younglings shout and sing;
And arch coquets the baby Queen with her small schoolboy King;
Foreshadowing of later years, when she, expectant wife,
Shall draw (as grant she may!) a prize from out the wheel of life.

God bless our English mother-flowers, their blossoms young and fair—
Our darlings with the sunny eyes and flowing golden hair!
And God be thank'd such tender joys of home to man are given,
As lighten all his hours of toil, and make of earth a heaven!

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.



TWELFTH-NIGHT AND SNAPDRAGON.



THE LADY-DOCTOR.

Saw ye that spinster tall and gray,
Whose aspect stern might well dismay
 A grenadier stout-hearted?
The golden hair, the blooming face,
And all a maiden's tender grace
 Long, long from her have parted.

A doctor she; her sole delight
To order draughts as black as night—
 Powders and pills and lotions:
Her very glance might cast a spell,
Transmuting sherry and moselle
 To less inviting potions.

Yet if some rash presumptuous man
Her early life should dare to scan,
 Strange things he might discover
For in the bloom of sweet seventeen
She wander'd through the meadows green
 To meet a youthful lover.

She did not give him Jesuits' bark
To brighten up his vital spark,
 Nor ipecacuanha,
Nor chlorodyne, nor camomile,
But blushing looks, and many a smile,
 And kisses sweet as manna.

But, ah, the maiden's heart grew cold;
Perhaps she thought the youth too bold;
 Perhaps his views had shock'd her:
In anger, scorn, caprice, or pride
She left her ardent wooer's side
 To be a lady-doctor.

She threw away the faded flowers,
Gather'd amid the woodland bowers,
 Her lover's parting token.
If suffering limbs we can relieve,
What need for aching souls to grieve?
 Why mourn, though hearts be broken?

She cared not though, with frequent moan,
He wander'd through the woods alone,
 Dreaming of past affection;
She valued at the lowest price
Men neither *patients* for advice
 Nor *subjects* for dissection.

The Lady-Doctor.

She studied hard for her degree ;
 At length the coveted M.D.
 Was to her name appended.
 Joy to that doctor young and fair,
 With rosy cheeks and golden hair,
 Learning with beauty blended !

Diseases man can scarce endure
 A lady's glance may quickly cure,
 E'en though the pain be chronic ;
 Where'er that maiden bright was seen
 Her eye surpass'd the best quinine,
 Her smile became a tonic.

But soon, too soon, the hand of care
 Sprinkled with snow her golden hair,
 Her face grew worn and jaded ;
 Forgotten was each maiden wile ;
 She scarce remember'd how to smile ;
 Her roses all were faded.

And now she looks so grim and stern,
 We wonder any heart could burn
 For one so uninviting ;
 No gentle sympathy she shows ;
 She seems a man in woman's clothes,
 All female graces slighting.

Yet blame her not, for she has known
 The woe of living all alone,
 In friendless dreary sadness ;
 She longs for what she once disdain'd,
 And sighs to think she might have gain'd
 A home of love and gladness.

MORAL.

Fair maid, if thine unfetter'd heart
 Yearn for some busy toilsome part,
 Let that engross thee only ;
 But, O, if bound by love's light chain,
 Leave not thy true and faithful swain
 Disconsolate and lonely.

C. N.

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

ENGLISH AMBASSADORS AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

THE departure of Lord Salisbury as Ambassador Extraordinary for Constantinople has set one musing on the subject of English embassies to the Porte, and gathering up one's *souvenirs*. It was only by the Treaty of Paris, some score of years ago, that Turkey entered into the European family party; but of course for centuries there have been ambassadors to discharge ambassadorial business. The Turks, however, for a long time had a peculiar way of dealing with ambassadors that made European Courts rather shy of diplomatic missions. The Sublime Porte, they said, was open to all the world. Any ambassador might go there; but they did not say anything about the ambassador coming away again. Accordingly, in the grand old Ottoman days, it was not impossible that in the case of war an ambassador might be shut up in prison, or have his head cut off, or be skinned alive, which naturally made people shy of becoming ambassadors. As it was openly laid down by the Turkish Ulema that no faith was to be kept with unbelievers, those unbelievers had fair warning of what they were to expect. The Turks resolved all mankind into two nations: the faithful formed one, and the dogs of infidels formed the other. The simple foreign politics of the Ottoman Porte were summed up in offering its neighbours the choice of the sword, the Koran, or the tribute. Other things being equal, however, the

Turks thought that the simple effective methods of the axe, the yataghan, or the bowstring were preferable in dealing with dogs of Christians. The advice tendered by one Grand Vizier to the Divan was, that all ambassadors should be confined to a small island near Constantinople, as lepers or other infectious and unclean persons. All Christian ambassadors, when introduced into the presence of the Sultan, were held back by both arms, on the supposition that they would like to be assassins if they dared.

It was trade, as is always the case, which led the way to diplomacy. In the days of Queen Bess the Levant Company was formed, only of a few people, only for short terms of years. The Levant Company wanted an ambassador. Queen Bess had no objections; but she had a frugal mind, and she told the Levant Company that if they wanted an ambassador they must pay him themselves. The Company demurred to the suggestion. The State Papers of the day had many references to the matter. If you run through the Calendars issued by the Master of the Rolls, the notices of this and the next reign are full of the matter. We are sorry to say that Queen Bess implored the Sultan to send a fleet 'against that idolater, the King of Spain.'

Probably not many of our readers are acquainted with the goodly folio which records negotiations with the Ottoman Porte, in the last years of James I. and the first years of Charles I., conducted by Sir Thomas Roe.

He went out to supersede an ambassador in disgrace, one Sir John Eyre. 'As I am not his judge, I will not be his accuser; there are enough prepared for that office. He had taken money by force, and pretends it was his right.' A very grave accusation to be brought against an ambassador, of all persons. Sir Thomas was a man perfectly well acquainted with commercial interests, and did his best to enforce them. He said of our English merchants that they were 'to the State as the liver to the body, which maintains the blood.' He was a grand old man, and his work is a very repertory of the history of his period. He resided in Constantinople in the wildest and most unsettled period of Ottoman history. It is claimed for him that he recovered from the Turks the respect due to ambassadors. Whenever they have dared, the Turks have treated ambassadors very insolently. During the half-dozen years of his residence he saw three or four Sultans, as many Grand Viziers, and all sorts of officers and others in rapid succession. He was a good man, who at one time redeemed eight hundred Christian captives from the Barbary corsairs. There are innumerable points worth notice suggested by his letters and despatches. The last Sultan whom he saw was Amurath IV. Now the reign of Amurath IV. is quite worth studying by English people who would understand what sort of person may be that chief and leader of the army of Turks who are dominant over the Christian populations of Europe. He had the frame of steel, the soul of fire. He illustrated the difference between the Turk on his carpet and the Turk on his steed. The *Arabian Nights* do not give such narratives of wild arbitrary cruelty. There is something like them in Pomponio Leti's stories of Sixtus

V., but Baron Hubner rejects them as fables. Amurath put to death a hundred thousand people, and he had a great fancy for putting them to death with his own hand. If a man came to his side whom he disliked, he would cleave his brain with his scimitar; if he saw a man in the street who, he thought, might be in his way, he despatched him with sure skilful arrow. Finding a road in bad repair, he hanged the chief judge of the district. His chief musician sang a Persian air; and, as he was at war with Persia, he ordered him to be beheaded. One day he saw a party of women dancing in a meadow; the noise disturbed him, and he ordered them to be drowned. Another day, a boat, with many ladies sailing along the Bosphorus, came rather too near the walls of the seraglio; he ordered a battery to open upon them, and the boat was sent to the bottom. He put an uncle and three brothers to death; and his last dying act was to order the execution of another brother. One is sorry that one of the finest gentlemen of his day should have had anything to do with the drunken sceptred scoundrel.

In 1716 Mr. Wortley Montagu was appointed ambassador to the Porte. His special object was to mediate between the Turks and the Imperialists. He was accompanied by his wife, with whom he had run away a few years before because her father had refused his consent through a disagreement about settlements. His embassy has been immortalised by the letters which Lady Mary wrote during this period, and which were published about half a century after they were written. At the time of this embassy Turkey was at the height of its pride and power. Mr. Wortley was consul-general of the Levant as well as ambassador. The *Weekly Journal*

of a Saturday in August states: 'On Wednesday, Edward Wortley Montagu, Esq., set forward on his embassy to Constantinople, and Thursday embarked at Gravesend for Holland.' Late in the year the *London Gazette* announces that he had left Constantinople for Hanover, with the design of returning. Various of his letters are preserved in the State-Paper Office; but his wife's letters to her friends are now thought of better value than tons of despatches. She describes Belgrade as being under the government of an insolent soldiery. She draws a frightful picture of the misgovernment of Servia. She was delighted with the beauty and the manners of the Turkish ladies; and her descriptions of harem-life are the most graphic and authentic that we possess. She gives one side of life at Constantinople, and Aaron Hill, who was there in Lord Paget's time, gives the opposite. Her embassy has the special feature of interest that at Constantinople she inoculated her son for smallpox, and so paved the way for vaccination. Mr. Wortley was succeeded by Mr. Stangar, who reports to Secretary Craggs that Mr. Wortley had sailed away on board a man-of-war. A letter is in existence written by Addison to Mrs. Wortley, intimating to her the recall that was coming. The ostensible reasons were that he would be of greater use to his party in Parliament, and that the King was so very fond of him that it was a pity that he should be so far away. With such diplomatic flatteries and courtesies are the feelings of wounded ambassadors assuaged. We expect that it was during her residence at Constantinople that she imbibed that taste for foreign life which for many long years kept her an exile from her home and friends until she returned to England, and spent

a few months with her son-in-law, Lord Bute, the Premier, before she died.

We can only allude to a few other of the least-known names on the roll of ambassadors.

We have the interesting volumes which Sir James Porter wrote of his fifteen years' embassy.

Sir Robert Adair, who was sent out by Mr. Canning to negotiate the peace of the Dardanelles, published three volumes of his letters and despatches, somewhat arid reading. His object was, in 1809, to break up the French and Russian alliance; and as Sir Robert had married a French wife, it was suggested that he had better leave Lady Adair behind him, which naturally made him very angry. We find him complaining of Russian diplomatic letters as impudent letters, and of Russian schemes as unveiled and exposed schemes, which, we suspect, is the usual ambassadorial language. The great bugbear in his time, however, was not Russia, but France. We were never safer from Napoleon's dream of universal conquest. He could make his influence at Constantinople a stepping-stone to Persia and the more distant East. It was the French object to reduce the influence of England to the very lowest point. The French boundary had been brought down to the Save, and they possessed nearly all Croatia. When there was a danger of Constantinople falling to the enemy, Adair took upon himself to write to Malta to ask for supplies of powder and lead for our Turkish allies. He writes: 'I have begged 5000 quintals of gunpowder for them from Malta; but God knows whether I shall get it.' In these days, our ambassadors don't write for supplies, but get a squadron ordered into Besika Bay. Russia was very anxious to strike a bargain with Napoleon for the pos-

session of Constantinople. Bonaparte, however, shook his head; if anybody had it he would prefer to have it himself. 'Not Constantinople,' he muttered; 'it is the empire of the world.'

A somewhat ugly story is connected with Lord Ponsonby, but it belongs rather to Lord Palmerston than to him. It was the Circassian business. He told the Circassians that in a struggle with Russia England would intervene on their behalf, and they were left in the lurch. The name of Lord Ponsonby often recurs in the political history of Servia. The great political business in Servia since 1830 has been the question of a constitution. Here England suffered a great diplomatic defeat. All through her history she has constantly suffered great political defeats. Our history mainly consists of victorious campaigns and disastrous treaties. The new state of Servia obviously became of great importance in the future of the Eastern Question. The Russians kindly sketched out a 'basis' for a constitution, but England sent a political agent to Servia to counteract Russian policy. There is no doubt that Lord Ponsonby, through this agent, obtained great influence over the mind of Prince Milosch. He assured them of the protection of England, and that Servia was not such a long way off that England could not help her. The Russians, however, carried their point, and their 'basis' was accepted. These were days when Servia had not achieved its full later independence, and the English Government then vividly felt the anxiety which it feels at present, that Turkey should deal justly with her Christian provinces as the only means of preventing the dismemberment of the empire. We may consider Lord Ponsonby's period as a time when England

really had a controlling voice in Servian councils, and her influence stood for a time even higher than Russia's.

But of all the ambassadors who have resided in Constantinople, none left such an impress of character and power as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. All through Turkey the name of 'Inglese' was as potent as was even that of *Civis Romanus*. Every Englishman could appeal with safety to his consul, and each consul was secure of support at the embassy. He was the great Eltchi. The austere purity of his life, the integrity of his character, astonished and overawed a people who were not familiar with such phenomena, either in their own social condition or their experiences of foreign ambassadors. The decrees which issued from the palace at Dolmabahatché were like fiat of fate. Mr. Kinglake, with a little humour and a little satire, calls him 'an imperfect Christian, for his temper was fierce; he followed up his opinions with his feelings, and with the whole strength of his imperious nature.' 'It was hard to resist the imperious ambassador to his face. If what he directed was inconsistent with the nature of things, then possibly the nature of things would be changed by the decree of Heaven, for there was no hope that the great Eltchi would relax his will.' The great Eltchi seems after his return to have abandoned foreign politics and confined his attention to writing dramas about King Alfred and arguments on the truth of Christianity; but lately he has set forth his ideas about the solution of the Eastern Question, and probably we shall have to fall back on some such scheme as he has enunciated.

It was an evil day for Turkey when he departed. Any ambassador would be unavoidably weak

in comparison; but the ambassadors who succeeded were not really strong men. Sir Henry Bulwer came next. He was a man who had won a high diplomatic character, but that reputation was pale and thin when compared with the mighty Eltchi. People said of him that he became too much of a Turk himself—that he affected Turkish ways and affected Turkish indolence. It was in his time that Prince Gortschakoff complained that the Sublime Porte had entirely neglected to carry out the body of public ordinances that had been issued in favour of the Christian population. These ordinances had never been really promulgated, or in any degree have been efficiently acted upon. It is little to the credit of the diplomatic service, or of Lord Dalling personally, that, so to speak, he ‘tipped the wink’ to the consuls that they should give answers which would, as little as possible, give any colour to the Russian complaint. The way in which he snubbed Mr. Longworth, who ventured to speak and think for himself, will long be a tradition in the consular service. Sir Henry Bulwer was the first to protest against the organisation of a national army in Servia. When the history of Servia is written, it will be seen that it was the personal influence of Sir Henry with Prince Michael which prevented the war between Servia and Turkey in ‘62.

Five years afterwards we had Lord Lyons. The Turks remembered the splendid services which his father had performed in their cause, and were not ungrateful. The Turks liked him, and, unfortunately, he did not like the Turks. He left soon, but not until he had endeared himself with many kindly memories.

We have left out of his proper place Earl Cowley, who com-

menced his ambassadorial career at Constantinople. Lord Cowley, in his noble abode at Therapia, lived serene, accomplishing what has always been his great mission, through a long diplomatic career, of letting things alone, and keeping them quiet. It was this happy art which made him permanent ambassador at Paris, during which period he won his earldom, and came in for the Mornington estates.

Lord Lyons’ successor was Sir Henry Elliot, but it can hardly be said that with all his good qualities he has sufficiently sustained the prestige of the English name. He adopted the old traditional policy, but it is doubtful whether he has succeeded in modifying it to fresh emergencies. He will be reinforced at the council-table of the Conference by one of the most astute, straightforward, and hard-hitting of modern statesmen, who has gathered up on his journey all the public opinion of Europe.

The great point of interest in Lord Salisbury’s mission is, that it opens up an entirely new stage in our diplomatic relations with Turkey. Our diplomacy has passed through various stages. First, there were our commercial interests; then there was Elizabeth’s nefarious idea that England and Turkey should unite to put down idolatry, which made some Turks suppose that all Englishmen were idolaters in heart; then we had the great political doctrine of the balance of power, and that it is our mission to preserve a barrier, first against the encroachments of France, and afterwards against the encroachments of Russia. This object is certainly not lost sight of; but for the first time, like the Emperor Napoleon, we have imported ‘an idea’ into the matter. The ‘idea’ is, that our Christian brethren in Turkey want sympa-

thy and support; that it is our duty to save them if we can from massacre and misgovernment; that the era of promises is past and the era of material guarantees must set in. Lord Salisbury is identified with an ecclesiastical party which is thoroughly sympathetic with the Greek Church; he has fairness, sympathy, ability, and high courage. His mission must be successful if Russia is sincere in her avowed views; but if the old Muscovite lust of territory is uppermost, then are we at a fresh beginning of sorrows.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CLUB-SYSTEM.

LOOKING through one of Theodore Hook's brilliant novels the other day, one was struck by the position which coffee-houses and hotels held in the story. The same may be said of some of the fictions of Charles Dickens. Men asked their friends to a dinner in the coffee-room or a private room at the Piazza, or the Tavistock, or the Old Hummums. Covent Garden was the region which corresponded with the modern Pall Mall. In British fiction we read the history of modern manners. The modern novelist has entirely shifted his ground from the coffee-house to the club. Little dinners can no longer be given at the hotels to the same extent that they used to be; they are given at clubs, particularly at those where the *chef* is famous for his *cuisine*. The club-system has moreover within the last few years witnessed an enormous development and extension. Fashion has of course had a great deal to do with it, but clubs have utilities and pleasures which meet a real need. In an increasing degree London clubs are required for others than Londoners. The country member who wants a *pied à terre* in town is an

increasingly important personage, and it is on his behalf that so many new clubs have sets of bedrooms attached. One remarkable feature, consequent on the expansion of clubs, is the immense predominance of very young men. Once there was a time when young men were in a minority at most clubs, but this is no longer the case. Most of the extravagances of the club is theirs. Paterfamilias comes to the club, and has his cut at the joint and quiet pint of sherry, while champagne is flowing like water at the youngsters' tables. Perhaps he only comes down because his study is being disturbed or his wife is going to give a party. I know a man—rather testy, I allow—who, when this sort of thing is coming off, leaves his house and takes a lodging in the neighbourhood for a week or two. Of course it is an advantage that young men should have a club to fall back on for a quiet evening; but the advantage may be neutralised by luxury and play. What such clubs may be we have seen delineated in the stories of Mr. Trollope and Shirley Brooks.

There never was a heavier crush of competition for admission into the great elder clubs than at the present time. The candidate must wait ten years for his turn. He must secure a hundred friends to support him. There are always people who are prepared to black-ball a stranger as a safe general principle. It is not a very amiable principle, but it helps to maintain the selectness of a club. It is calculated that for the Athenæum a man ought to beat up some hundred and fifty supporters. Yet the expenses of the Athenæum have greatly increased within recent years, and the old literary character is impaired. In the same way the Garrick is not at all, as it used to be, the great place for actors and

authors; it is in some sort a fashionable resort of peers and guardsmen. The old element, that of newspaper writers, actors, critics, is to be found much more extensively in lowlier clubs. There is a whole diapason of clubs, extending from the club called *THE CLUB*, and will own no other title—Johnson's famous club, which still gloriously subsists—to those where a landlord lets off a part of his house or his hotel. But the extension has been not only in a vertical, but in a lateral direction. Recently, owing mainly to the intense pressure, we have seen new clubs, like *Minerva*, springing in full panoply from the brain of Jove, at once at the acme of dignity and fashion. Take the two great political clubs, the *Devonshire* and *St. Stephen's*. There is not much to choose between the *Carlton* and the *Junior Carlton*, between the *Athenæum* and the *Junior Athenæum*—at least in the opinions of the junior clubs. As for internal organisation, the club-system is so perfected that most clubs are scarcely susceptible of improvement in details. They mainly differ in the prestige of the members, and their excellence of kitchen and cellar.

But clubs are not the clubable places which they used to be. They are now too vast to be social. You may be almost lost in the splendid solitude of the library and drawing-room. Unless you belong to a set, it is not your club that will bring you into one. Moreover, in the extension of the club-system is included the fact that many men have a passion for clubs, and get themselves enrolled members of an absurd number. We can quite understand a man belonging to an old club, *Brooks's*, *White's*, or *Boodle's*, and having his political club, *Carlton* or *Reform*, with a social club like the *Marlborough*, if he be a friend of the *Prince's*;

but what is the use of a man having seven or eight clubs? He will say that he likes one for its dinners, another for its cards, a third for its library, a fourth for its billiards, a fifth for its supper, a sixth for its society, and so on; but a man of many clubs really loses, instead of gaining, the peculiar benefit of each. Still the old social element is not vanished. It is most complete at the *Marlborough*, the peculiar domain of the most social of princes.

There is one club in particular where I often have the privilege of being a guest. It would be called a small club by outsiders, but it has so many names famous in literature and art that I can hardly regard this as a correct assignation. Now at this club we are particularly social and clubable—something in the old eighteenth-century style of the *Turk's Head*. Every member, by the fact of membership, is supposed to be the friend and acquaintance of every other member. There never is a time when there is not pleasant talk and genial companionship. There is a club-dinner at seven; no man is expected to dine in solitary state if he can possibly help it. Towards midnight there is a supper-table spread, whereat men, who have dropped in perchance from theatres and newspaper-offices, sit down and partake of cheering viands. They are most seductive fellows, the youngsters at that club. You hear much in their flying talk which you afterwards recognise in the daily press and the comic papers. In the midst of the roaring fun you suspect that they are mutually employed in picking each other's brains. Before you get home the doubtful stars may be struggling with the gray dawn. You are not quite the same as you were in the days when *Plancus* was consul. You confess you have

enjoyed yourself, but it is a pleasure to be partaken of sparingly and at distant intervals.

There have been more new clubs within the last five years than within the fifteen years preceding. It is not only that there are new clubs, but that the clubs themselves develop. A club begins a modest existence in a quiet street. Then it builds itself a mansion, or finds some institution or public building on a large scale which is opportunely put up for sale. By and by it is battering away at the neighbouring buildings to enlarge itself. Then the entrance-fee is raised again, and the subscription; and if the club has turned out a popular one, the entrance-fee will be raised again, but otherwise 'you may speculate for a fall.' The fact that all the best clubs are overcrowded always presents an opening for a crop of new ones. The majority of them are proprietary clubs, the proprietor being virtually the landlord of great hotels. He gets some good name as a secretary, and it is the secretary who mainly brings together a good committee or set of committees. You certainly have not the liabilities of a speculation, but then you pay hotel-prices, and not club-prices. You have simply to compare the wine-lists, supposing that the wine committees are equally good, and you see the difference. One great cause of the extension of clubs is this proprietary system, in which, nevertheless, if the proprietor is wise, he keeps out of sight as much as possible.

It is remarkable to see also how the club-system has spread into the provinces. Manchester and Leeds have several clubs. The club at Bradford is one of the best clubs in the kingdom. But a few miles off, at Halifax, the local club, considered as a club, is but of little importance. Bath

and Clifton have their clubs, something of the Rag and Famish order, but with the incurable weakness of running away much into gossip, the unavoidable defect of all watering-place clubs. There is no club pleasanter in its way, and no nobler place, than the Royal Western Yacht Club at Plymouth. All yacht-clubs are immensely pleasant; but the situation of this club on the Hoe, with that wonderful Sound in front, and the Mount Edgcombe grounds on the west, is uniquely superb. You may see also in this club how admirably cheapness and goodness may be combined.

The ladies are now in real earnest setting up clubs of their own. There are several of them in the provinces. At Exeter there is a particularly good one, appropriately enough, next door to the gentlemen's club. In London the want has for some time been overlooked, but there is a good one forming in Regent-street.

So much, then, for the marvellous extension of the club-system. There is some reason to suppose, however, that this system has well-nigh reached the highest point of development. It has never been a favourite institution with the British matron, and that idea of hers in getting up a club of her own is mainly a spiteful one after all. It is to show her lord that she can do without him, and can do as he does. But it is a wholesome kind of competition to make home so pleasant that the club is uncomfortable in the comparison. It is not so much that a man cares for liveried servants, spacious rooms, and multiplied luxuries. A club is useful in so many ways—for meeting people, for letter-writing, for asking a man to dinner. A man may work away at a subject for many hours, and pick up more about it by a few hours in a

club than by all the books and newspapers. But a man can have all the new books left at his house from the libraries, and he is obliged to take in some of the best periodicals, and expenditure for entertainment is much better laid out when for the common benefit of the home circle, and he can get repose and ease at home; and so when he can with pleasure accept the conditions of home-life, he will be won from wild gregarious instincts, and take his place with Mr. Darwin's 'Animals and Plants under Domestication.' The rapid increase of clubs is not quite a healthy symptom, and we should not be altogether sorry to witness an abatement.

NEW BOOKS.

OF course the Eastern Question has produced a whole crop of books. The gentlemen and ladies who had previously written on the Eastern Question, and established some sort of reputation as authorities, naturally enough rushed into print once more. Mr. Lewis Farley, in the title of his work,* engages to settle the Eastern Question; but we read the work in a state of amazement, for he seems to be unsaying and denying everything which he had ever written in favour of Turkey. Mr. Denton has republished his *Christians of Turkey*,† having considerably added to his book of thirteen years ago, and brought it completely down to the present date. Mr. Denton preserves a prudent silence about the Greek bishops, who, conniving with the Moslems, have unmercifully fleeced their flocks. He has always been clear,

definite, and unmistakable in his views. He makes it abundantly clear, which indeed is substantiated by ample evidence in other quarters, that the Christians suffer most iniquitously at the hand of their Moslem oppressors, and that it is utterly hopeless to expect any amelioration in their condition, or indeed any kind of reform from Mussulman rule. From the experiences of millions of human beings this must be taken as a final historical law. We believe that the true solution will be the occupation of the subject Christian provinces until the present evil conditions are swept away; but the occupation ought not to be Russian, but British or French, Swiss or Austrian. It unfortunately happens that those who are wide awake to the misfortunes of the Christians seem to close their eyes to the intrigues of the Russ. We should find out the true conditions of this Eastern problem, and thus reconcile them as we best may. We are sorry to hear loud and increasing whispers in favour of the Czar Nicholas's old policy of Russia taking Turkey, and England receiving Crete and Egypt. We only wonder how the advocates for the Christians can argue in favour of such unchristian robbery and spoliation. An excellent little book about Turkey and its history has been issued by the Religious Tract Society.* It may be called a geographical history of Turkey. The historical narrative is meagre; but the book is full of useful information conveyed in the pleasantest way. The same Society has issued a companion publication, *Slavs and Turks*,† which will be

* *Turks and Christians: a Solution of the Eastern Question.* By J. Lewis Farley. (Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.)

† *The Christians of Turkey: their Condition under Mussulman Rule.* By the Rev. W. Denton, M.A., author of *Servia and the Servians*. (Daldy, Isbister, & Co.)

* *The Turkish Empire: the Sultans, the Territory, and the People.* By Rev. T. Milner, M.A. New edition. (Religious Tract Society.)

† *Slavs and Turks: the Border Lands of Islam in Europe.* (Religious Tract Society.)

found extremely interesting and useful. Mr. Forsyth has just reprinted his papers on the same subject from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but his publication is not so full, clear, and impartial as that issued by the Society we have mentioned. Akin to these are several works of Eastern travel which have excited a good deal of attention on their appearance. Besides the general interest always attaching to such travels, they have a special interest at the present time, owing to their reference to Russia. It is of great importance, while carefully avoiding anything like Russophobia, accurately to gauge the views of Russia, and make our own calculations accordingly. Captain Burnaby* maintains that at the present moment we could without any European ally drive the Russians from Central Asia, but that if we permit them to annex further provinces the advantage of attack would be on their side. He considers that we should intimate to the Russian Government that a further advance in our direction would be regarded as a *casus belli*. The Emperor Alexander himself is said to be strongly opposed to the policy of annexation, but nevertheless there have been the widest annexations in his time. Russian officers in Central Asia are longing for a war with England about India, which indeed would be very popular in European Russia, and in Russia military opinion is practically public opinion.

Captain Burnaby was induced to undertake this journey in a very characteristic way. He was at Khartoum, on the Nile, when his eye happened to alight on a newspaper paragraph stating that the Government of St. Petersburg had given orders that no foreigner should be

allowed to travel in Central Asia. Captain Burnaby immediately resolved that he would go to Central Asia. He knew, however, that this could not be done without a permit from the Russian Government, which he obtained with less difficulty than he had expected. The personal element in the book is full of interest. There is a horrible narrative where the author was momentarily expecting that his feet and hands would drop off through frost-bite. They were only saved through the happy accident of some spirits of naphtha being at hand. The Russian authorities kept a sharp eye upon him, although he was permitted to travel about, and even gain entrance into Khiva itself. He found the Khan profuse in his expressions of regard towards the English people. His recall did not proceed, however, from the Russian Government, but from our own War Office. The telegram was from H.R.H. Field-Marshal the Duke of Cambridge, commanding his immediate return from Asiatic Russia to European Russia. Thus his work of careful observation, which might have been useful to England, was suddenly cut-off from England itself. Was it that Russian influence was brought to bear at the Horse Guards? It would be interesting to the public if H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge would condescend to give some information on the subject.

Mr. Munro Butler-Johnstone, one of the members for Canterbury, has issued a second edition of his *Trip up the Volga, to the Fair of Nijni Novgorod*.* About ten years ago Mr. Forsyth, M.P., also wrote a similar book, but it was for private circulation only, the edition being limited to fifty copies. Both parliamentary writers get at least half-way through the book before

* *A Ride to Khiva: Travels and Adventures in Central Asia*. By Fred. Burnaby, Captain Royal Horse Guards. (Cassell, Petter, & Galpin.)

* Parker, Oxford and London.

they come to the great fair, the greatest in the world. Captain Burnaby says in his book: 'An English gentleman, a well-known M.P., foreseeing the rise which would take place in the value of property near Samara, has bought a large and beautiful estate in that neighbourhood. According to my companion, he would double the capital invested, should he in the course of a few years wish to part with his purchase.' We wonder if the M.P. is Mr. Forsyth or Mr. Johnstone. Mr. Butler-Johnstone, as his nature is, of course goes into the high politics of the matter. He thinks that Russia is ten times stronger than she was at the time of the Crimean war. It may, however, be doubted whether Russia has improved to a greater extent than England has done. We shut Russia up at the time, but Mr. Johnstone says that was for her good. 'The consequence was that you gave an extension to her national industries for which her manufacturers are still deeply grateful.' At the time of Mr. Forsyth's visit the tea-trade of the fair was mainly an overland trade, but now the tea comes by sea and is cheaper.

But Mr. Schuyler's work* on Turkistan is beyond question the principal one of this class, and the book of travel of the moment. His political view is of course very different from that of English politicians. He wishes to see the Russians firmly settled in Central Asia as a counterpoise to the English power in India. We are surprised that his account of Russian atrocities in the East should have met with so much attention. It ought to have been no matter of surprise; Russian warfare has always been accompanied with atrocities. No histories can

be more horrible and horrifying than those which tell of the campaigns of Suwarrow and of Count Orloff. Mr. Schuyler's work, now in its fourth edition, has attracted such a large and deserved amount of attention that, instead of attempting within our limited space any epitome of the subject-matter, we recommend his fascinating pages at once to the reader of travel, who can enjoy these fresh strange pictures of Oriental life, and to the student of Central Asian problems for the light thrown upon a large political question now of urgent importance.

Mr. Barkley has written a bright sparkling book about his five years' residence in Bulgaria.* There is hardly anything of history or politics in it; he went out to lay down a railway, and tells all his adventures and misadventures. He had at times very enviable luck with game, thirty-three brace of partridges in an afternoon. He says that Bulgaria is the best country in the world for ornithology, and had some thrilling adventures in collecting the eggs of eagles and vultures. He draws, almost without intending it, a frightful picture of the abuses and misgovernment of the country. But all through Turkish history we have similar narratives of dispassionate observers, and their depositions with an unvarying testimony tell us of that persistent evil which has never been mitigated, and of which no mitigation seems possible. It is cheering to read how an Englishman like Mr. Barkley knew how to flog and punish one of those beggarly zaptiehs. Here is his estimate of the bashi-bazouks, of whom about a thousand came to his district one day in government transports from Constanti-

* *Turkistan: Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkistan, Kokand, Bukhara, and Kuldja*. By Eugene Schuyler. (Sampson Low, Marston, & Co.)

* *Between the Danube and Black Sea, or Five Years in Bulgaria*. By Henry C. Barkley. (Murray.)

noble: 'If any other troops in Europe had behaved half as badly in a conquered enemy's country as these animals did at home, they would have been hanged by scores. . . . If the galleys and hulks of all Europe were searched, and a thousand of the worst characters picked out from among them, they would be orderly reasonable beings in comparison with these creatures.'

The handsome volume entitled *A Journal and Memoir of Commodore Goodenough*,* is a worthy and deserved memorial of a good man and an admirable sailor. James Graham Goodenough was the son of a dean, the grandson of a bishop, and had for his godfather no less a personage than the First Lord of the Admiralty. His way in his profession was made clear for him. His examination, in these days of competition, seems easy enough. He was told to sit down in an office and do a sum and a piece of dictation. But none the less he proved a very accomplished, useful, and zealous officer. He was essentially a man of modern views, and those in the best way. He was opposed to corporal punishment; he was in favour of giving the sailor abundance of leave; and he loved his men passionately. He spoke seven different languages. He saw arduous service in every part of the world; he was employed by the Government to go from country to country and collect information respecting the maritime strength of different Powers. He was strongly in favour of making the navy a scientific service, and urged its great opportunities for culture and the study of Nature. He was a man of rare character and gifts, which he improved and developed to the utmost. The affecting circumstances

of his death made his name familiar to all his countrymen. His death precisely resembled that of Bishop Pattison. He was attacked by the natives on an island in the Pacific, who, unknowing what they did, slew their truest friend. The wound was slight, but it had been made by a poisoned arrow. The last sentences in his last letter refer to this: 'The weather is lovely, and entirely favourable to the little wounds, which are absurdly small. My only trouble is a pain in the small of my back, which is a little against my sleeping. I am exceedingly well. . . . I have asked Perry to put out a statement for the papers, so that we may have no outrageously foolish stories. I can only imagine the motive to have been plunder, or a sort of running amuck. I don't feel—' Here the writing abruptly terminates. He sailed away from the island to die, refusing to allow a single life to be taken in retaliation. All England became acquainted with the story of his last hours, one of the most affecting ever penned.

We are very glad to notice in a collected form the entire poetical works of Ebenezer Elliott in a new and revised edition.* It is appropriately edited by his son, the Rector of St. John's, Antigua; for whom we might have hoped that an English benefice might have been provided by the political party who owed some portion of their success to the author of the *Corn-Law Rhymes*. We are not sure that the title of these songs has not, for many minds, blurred Mr. Elliott's true distinctive character as a poet. But from the early 'Juvenile Poems,' written when only in his seventeenth year, there is the true poetic ring about them,

* *Journal of Commodore Goodenough during his last Command on the Australian Station*. Edited, with a Memoir, by his Widow. (H. S. King & Co.)

* *Poems of Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn-Law Rhymor*. Edited by his Son, the Rev. Edwin Elliott, St. John's, Antigua. Two vols. (H. S. King & Co.)

a freshness and elevation of thought which will always attract readers. Reading the poems in their chronological order, we attain to what Wordsworth gave as the second title of his *Prelude*, 'The Growth of a Poet's Mind.' It is curious to look at the different dedications of the poems in a time when dedications were in fashion. One is inscribed to 'Henry Lytton Bulwer, Esq., who helped me when I was poor and helpless;' another to 'Robert Southey, who condescended to teach me the art of poetry;' another to 'G. Calvert Holland, M.D., who, by his efforts in favour of universal education, is

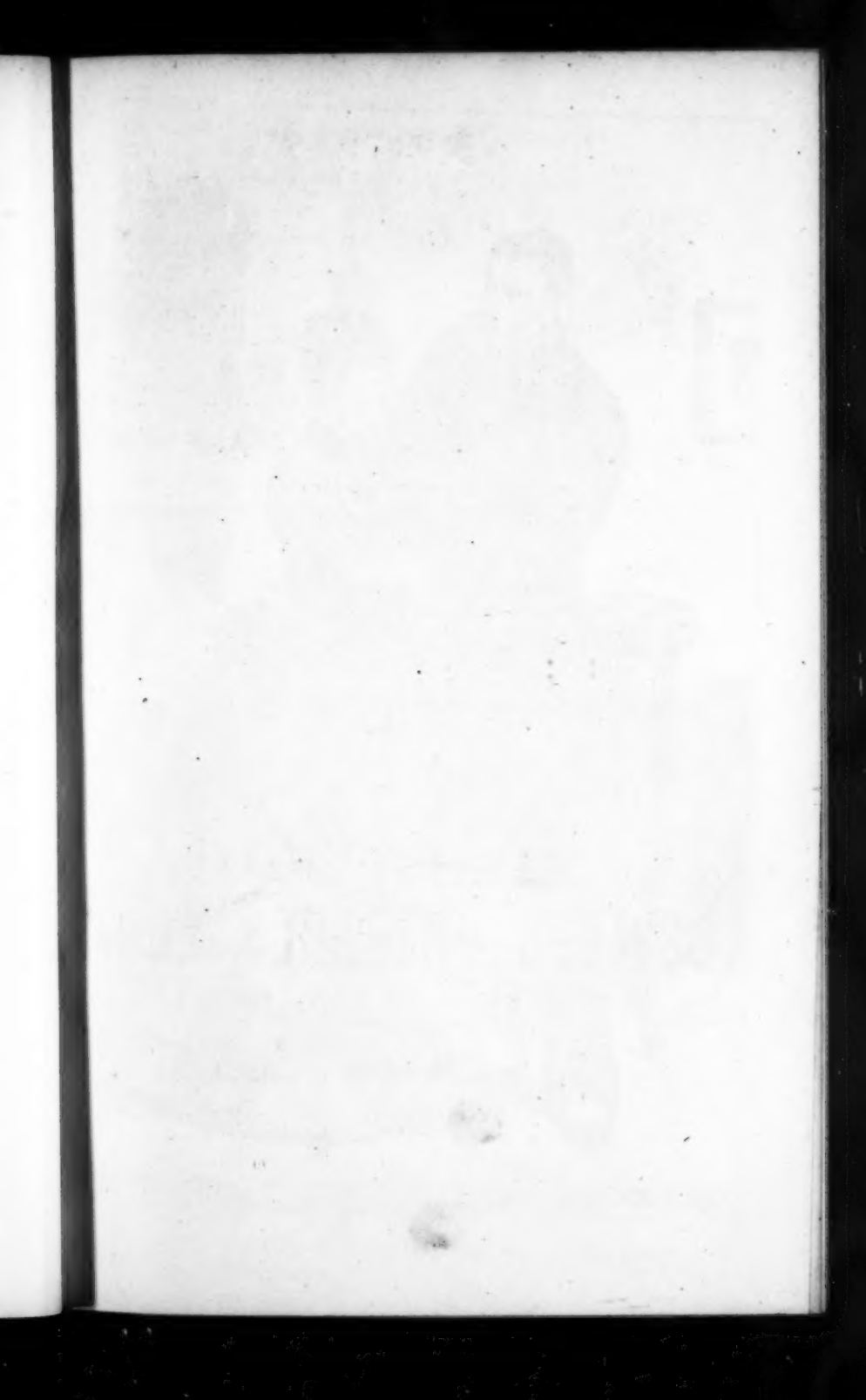
preparing better days for the England of my children and a brighter futurity for the human race;' another to James Montgomery, 'this fragment, an evidence of my presumption and my despair;' another to 'Henry Brougham, the friend of the poor and the champion of education.' There are similar dedications and annotations which give glances at his private history and his political opinions. With any critical drawbacks, Ebenezer Elliott is after all a national poet, and it is eminently right and befitting that the whole of his works should be gathered together in these goodly volumes.

A LIFEBOAT-MAN'S YARN.

Looks dirty, sir? Ay, you are right;
 And just here you feel it most.
 No, I ain't seen a rougher night
 Since the time the *Pearl* was lost.
 How was that then? If you don't mind
 We'll get to the under-cliff,
 Then I'll tell you—for this here wind
 Do blow most uncommon stiff.
 Now just let me think; it must be
 Nine years come next Christmas-day.
 Ay, nine years it is! Goodness me!
 How the time do slip away!
 Well, it blew 'great guns,' as we say,
 Three days from the Nor'-Nor'-West,
 And the fourth—that was Christmas-day—
 Instead of getting a rest,
 I am almost inclined to think
 It was blowing harder still.
 Well, as I was having a drink
 Along o' my chum, 'Long Bill,'
 About noon—to be quite correct—
 Upon that same Christmas-day,
 I heard tell that a ship was wreck'd
 Not fifty yards from the bay.

Well, of course, I ran to the shore,
 And our crews turn'd out all hands ;
 And when on the beach there we saw
 A barque on the shifting sands.
 It was clear she would not last long,
 For when that 'bar' gets a *grip*,
 The waves beat so terrible strong
 They'd shatter the stoutest ship.
 And this was but a little craft,
 With seven men for a crew,
 And they, with their skipper, stood aft
 To see what we meant to do.
 For it chanced to happen that we,
 In bringing two men to shore,
 Strain'd our boat in a heavy sea
 Just the afternoon before.
 As we hadn't got rockets then,
 Why, the only thing to do
 Was for one of us lifeboat men
 To swim to the shipwreck'd crew.
 All my mates was married, you see ;
 As the only single chap,
 Why, the one to go must be me,
 For fear of a slight mishap.
 For it's cruel, I reckon, sir,
 When the man that wins the bread—
 Him as feeds the young uns and her
 Who's his wife—is brought home dead.
 Was I frighten'd ? I can't quite say—
 I hadn't much time, d'ye see—
 But I said, by way of a pray,
 'Our Father, watch over me !'
 And, thinks I, if the time is nigh
 When I must my cable slip,
 Well and good ; but I meant to try
 My hardest to reach that ship.
 Yes, I own I had had enough
 By the time the line was fast,
 For them breakers was awful rough ;
 But we saved 'em all at last.
 But none of our fellows, I know,
 Nor never one on this coast,
 Could touch me at swimming ; and so
 I haven't no call to boast.

JOSEPH SWIFT.





'Stanny, you're a big man—a giant—and O, so, strong; can't you push your way in the crowd?'

See 'Kiss and Try,' p. 103.